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TO THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR 1909

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TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
FOR 1909

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph. D.

4444

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
Fleming H. Revell Company
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GENERAL SCHEME

Suggestions for Teaching the Lessons. The Books of the New Testament. The Acts. Paul the Hero of the Acts. The Pauline Epistles and Hebrews. The General Epistles; James. The Roman World in the First Century.

The Bible Text. Words and Phrases Explained. Suggestive Thoughts from Helpful Writers. Light from Oriental Life.. The Historical Background. The Geographical Background.

The Approach to the Lesson. Three Lesson Topics with Illustrations. Sentence Sermons. The Lesson's Meanings for Us. The Lesson briefly Told. Subjects for Bible Class Discussion. Work to be Assigned.

Maps, Diagrams and Pictures.

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LESSONS FOR 1909

Acts and Epistles. The Expansion of the Early Church.

(The Ascension of Christ and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Lessons I and II. The expansion of the kingdom: in Jerusalem, lessons III to VIII of first quarter; in Samaria, lesson IX, first quarter; in all Judea, lessons X and XI of first quarter and I and II of second quarter; under Paul the apostle of the Gentiles, lesson III of second quarter to lesson XII of fourth quarter.)

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TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

FOR 1909

INTRODUCTORY

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING THE LESSONS

The Aim of This Guide. Understandest thou what thou readest? Philip asked the Ethiopian treasurer whom he found reading Isaiah the prophet as he rode in his chariot toward Gaza, and the Ethiopian answered, How can I, except some one shall guide me? These words in a lesson of this year's course gave to this book its title of "Teacher's Guide."

Sunday-school teachers are busy people. They can not devote their entire time to a study of the text, the search for the thoughts of great writers in regard to it, the discovery of the light thrown upon its meaning by the customs and the thoughts of oriental people, the tracing of the historical background which gives unity to all the lesson texts of the year, making harmony of what would otherwise be haphazard teaching, the learning of the geographical data that give vividness and a sense of reality to the events, the development of the topic which the lesson teaches, the gaining of interesting illustrations which aptly enforce that topic, the culling of literary gems exactly applicable to the thought of the lesson, and the learning of the best methods of teaching. This and more "The Guide" aims to do for the teacher. Its purpose is to make the teacher the possessor of a living knowledge of the Book, of a wealth of interesting information and of pertinent illustrations, and of the best way of presenting these to his pupils so that the great truths of the lessons may live and bear fruit in their daily lives.

The Teacher's View Point. The teacher must know his subject. He must also know his pupils. One who has served as a substitute teacher fully realizes the disadvantage under which he labors in not knowing those whom he teaches. There are depths and shallows in every lesson. A substitute teacher may make the mistake of overwhelming pupils in the depths, or of letting them only wade in the shallows; the regular teacher knows the right level to which he should direct them.

There is an interesting dialogue in Dr. William Robertson's lectures on German Student Life that is applicable here: "Explain to me Hegelianism, Hermann," requested Louisa. "Nay, you could not understand it, Louisa," Hermann declared. "Nay, say rather that you are not able to explain it; for it seems to me that what one understands himself, he ought to be able to explain to another." "Yes, to one who can also understand; I could not explain it, for instance, to a crow!" "No, but one crow could explain it to another crow, if he understood it himself. They seem to understand each other's cawing, when their college meets in the ploughed field."

One who thoroughly understands a religious subject, and understands his pupils so that he can put himself in their place, look at things from their point of view, from their stage of mental and religious development, can explain that subject to them, even though it be as difficult as Hegelianism. He must not

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make the mistake of thinking that he is a man and they are crows. Nor, if he has a class that is growing in mental and spiritual stature, must he make the mistake of failing to look at them occasionally with fresh eyes, for he will not have Paul's good reason for feeding them with milk if they are ready for meat.

The writer of "The Guide" looks at lessons from the point of view of pupils of all ages; something there is in each lesson for all classes. The teacher will study "The Guide" from the point of view of his own pupils, and will make use of what meets his pupils' needs.

The Aim of the Teacher. It is a splendid course which the International Lesson Committee has given us this year. It covers the entire Book of the Acts, together with eleven lessons from the Epistles. Before beginning the work, teachers should survey the field. They should read the Acts through very carefully, and gain a clear conception of the purpose of the Book as a whole. They should read what is said about the Book and its hero in this "Guide," pages 16-19, and should make this information their own. Then they should decide what they will seek to accomplish during the year.

So much is said in these days about what Sunday-school teachers should know and do, of their need of being as thoroughly equipped for their work as the day-school teachers, that a word of caution here in regard to two dangers may not be amiss. In fifty-two half hours at best a year you can not accomplish as much for the physical and mental and moral and spiritual life of your pupils as the day-school teacher can in two hundred long days. Therefore do not be discouraged if the results of your teaching are not immediately evident. Then, too, because there is so much to teach, do not do what Charles Dudley Warner did when he aimed at his bear "in general". Such general aiming may hit the mark now and then, but it is as poor a method in teaching as in marksmanship. Have a definite aim, and keep that aim in mind throughout the year, and you will accomplish the seemingly impossible.

Two things at least the teacher of every class should have accomplished when this year closes. He should have led his pupils to an understanding of Paul's life and the growth of Christianity during apostolic times—more detailed in the older classes but clear in all—and to the daily putting into practice the truths which the lessons have for their own lives here and now.

The Preparation of the Lesson. Bishop Thoburn has well said that if the inspired writer is more than a stenographer, the inspired speaker is more than a phonograph. The teacher can be only a superficial speaker who leaves the preparation of the lesson until Saturday evening. The lesson must be examined more than a week in advance sufficiently to enable one to decide which of the topics he will use, and what work he will give his pupils to do during the coming week. On Monday previous to the teaching of the lesson, study the Text, the Words and Phrases Explained, The Lesson Briefly Told, and the Historical Background, checking on the margin of your book the points which are for your pupils. On Tuesday read the Thoughts from Helpful Writers, the Geographical Background, and the Light from Oriental Life, again with pencil in hand. Wednesday review the lesson topic that you have decided to make the basis of your teaching, and simplify in your mind or by writing them out, the illustrations that are given in too difficult wording for young pupils, or amplify them by adding helpful thoughts of your own for older pupils. Check in "The Guide" the Approach to the Lesson, the Lesson Meaning, and the Sentence Sermons intended for your pupils. On Friday make out the lesson plan that you will follow in your teaching, noting under each heading by a suggestive word the information or illustration you will give, the questions you will ask, or the work you will call for from your pupils. On Saturday review your plan, fixing all parts of it thoroughly in your mind.

The Spirit of the Teaching. Dullness is the unpardonable sin in a Sunday-school teacher. His earnestness and enthusiasm are in themselves sermons that the dullest pupil can appreciate. Be alive, interested in your theme and your pupils, and your own spirit will be contagious. If pupils are inattentive it is because they are uninterested, and if they are uninterested it is because their teacher does not arouse their interest. If there is attention on the part of the pupils there will also be retention of what they hear discussed in the class.

The Words and Phrases Explained. The Revised Version translates more accurately the original Greek than does the Authorized Version, and the changes in wording made in the Revision are often in themselves a commentary on the lessons. Compare the Revised Version given in "The Guide" with the Authorized or King James' Version of 1611, and notice how many difficulties have disappeared.

Every teacher should study the explanations given in "The Guide," but rarely will it be wise to teach pupils the meaning of the verses one after the other, for this method is tiresome and uninstructive to practically all classes. As you develop the lesson bring out the right thought by making the necessary explanation at the right time, and be content to leave much unexplained. In the tenth lesson of the first quarter occur these words: And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. A seven-year-old boy to whom I was once teaching this lesson asked in all seriousness, "How could Philip preach if he did not open his mouth?" To him it was necessary to explain that while we only say "Philip preached", the people where Philip lived said that "he opened his mouth and preached" because they thought that by using all these words they showed that he was not carelessly talking but was saying something of great importance. Few young pupils would ask such a question, and such an explanation should not be given them unless called for.

Suggestive Thoughts from Helpful Writers. The selections given under this heading not only illuminate the lessons but also stimulate thought, for they are not written from the ordinary view points.

Light from Oriental Life. Paul begins his speech before Agrippa by saying that he thinks himself especially happy in being able to make his defense before a king who was "expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." Agrippa's familiarity with Jewish life and thought would enable him to understand Paul's answer to Jewish accusations. If such knowledge was necessary in Paul's time, how much more is it in ours! The writers of the Acts and the Epistles expressed their thoughts in the language of their time and in accordance with the thought and usages of their time: we must know what their words meant in the circumstances and among the people where they were written.

The Historical Background. As early as 1535 Miles Coverdale in the preface to his English translation of the Bible gave this sane advice: "It will greatly help you to understand Scripture, if you mark not only what is written, but of whom and to whom; with what words, at what time, where, to what extent, with what circumstances, considering that which goes before and that which follows." His counsel is followed in the Historical Background, where is given something of the secular history touched upon at many points by the sacred history, and where is brought out the close sequence of thought between lessons. There should be no chaotic teaching of isolated events, but a systematic presentation of a complete history.

The Geographical Background. The Book of the Acts is a book of cities, first Jerusalem, then Samaria and Antioch in Syria, and then Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium and Lystra, Philippi and Thessalonica and Berea, Athens and Corinth, Ephesus, and at last Rome. The life of Paul is a life of travel from one city to another, and can not be intelligently taught without a knowledge of the geography of the Eastern Mediterranean world in the first century. The black and white maps of Paul's journeys given in this book should be carefully studied. Provide your pupils with outline maps, or have them make their own, and on them let them trace Paul's journeys as they are studied. The large colored map should be in constant use. Don't tell your pupils the geographical locations, but make them see them on a map. There is no value, for instance, in teaching pupils that Tarsus, Paul's home, was in Cilicia, if they do not know where Cilicia was, and perhaps not even where is the peninsula of Asia Minor.

The Approach to the Lesson. To secure the attention and interest of your pupils from the start is most important. Do not leave to the spur of the moment the way in which you will begin the lesson. Two suggestions are given in "The Guide," adapted one to younger and the other to older pupils. Sometimes the best introduction will be a review of the previous lesson or a talk about the

intervening events, and sometimes striking questions will quickly arouse interest in your theme.

The Lesson Topics. Said a noted English preacher, "The fault with my sermons is that they have many crude ideas and jump from one to another instead of having a single one well developed." One great aim of "The Guide" is to avoid a similar fault in Sunday-school teaching. It avoids also that fault which Dr. Faunee suggestively calls "acrobatic performances on single texts," which he illustrates by recalling a talk upon the duty of cutting off evil habits given by a minister who took for his text Jeremiah 36.23, Cut it with a penknife! Every lesson presents so many direct truths that the temptation is not to seek far-fetched topics, but the difficulty is to select the three most important ones. When you have chosen the one of the three most important for your class, make that the theme about which you group all your teaching, and teach it so that your pupils may never wholly forget it.

The Missionary Topic. A year with the Acts is necessarily a year with Missions, and therefore one of the topics of nearly every lesson this year is a missionary topic. One of our large denominational papers recently published the number of their churches which contributed nothing to foreign missions except through the women's societies, with the comment that those churches evidently needed some boys to grow up with a little more generosity and Christian spirit. This Christian spirit should be learned in the Sunday-school. The pupil who does not care about missions is the pupil who does not know about missions. Implant in your pupils the missionary spirit, give them an appreciation of the nobility of lives devoted to mission work, let them gain a right conception of God's plan for the world, and arouse in them sympathy and a sense of responsibility for their brothers of all lands and races.

Illustrations. An illustration fastens a truth in the memory as nothing else can. It is always best to discuss things by the help of concrete examples, says Professor James in writing for adults. No child's mind has any intense interest in abstract subjects. Virtues never seem real till they are provided with flesh and blood and are seen in a human life. The illustrations given are pertinent and helpful. Practice will enable any one to tell them effectively. "Of all the things that a teacher should know how to do, the most important without any exception, is to be able to tell a story," says the President of Clark University.

Sentence Sermons. These words of master-thinkers express beautiful thoughts in beautiful language, and aptly enforce the truths of the lesson. They are easily committed to memory, and their principles will be put into practice. Have one or two of them written on your blackboard or on a large pad before each lesson, and then let them be copied in your pupils' note-books. In some schools one of these sentences is written each week on a large sheet of paper artistically outlined or decorated and hung where all the school can see it, and it is eagerly read and copied. Printed letters may be purchased and the sentence or verse quickly made with them.

The Lesson's Meanings for Us. The average pupil is inclined to think that the lessons taught in the Sunday-school have to do with what occurred centuries ago, which does not concern him personally. These things are written that ye might have life. Each lesson is full of truths of present day value. "The Guide" gives several suggestions as to the way in which pupils may put these truths into practice. Select the one your class needs.

The Lesson Briefly Told. The criticism is often made that the International Lessons do not treat the books of the Bible as a whole, but give only hop-skip-and-jump selections. The way in which the lessons are sometimes taught has given rise to such criticism, not the way in which the lesson texts themselves are selected by the International Committee. A reference to the heading of each lesson as given in "The Guide" will show that the verses printed do not constitute the whole lesson; the lesson in each case is a much larger section beginning where the preceding lesson ends. The Lesson Briefly Told and The Historical Background of all the lessons cover the entire Book of the Acts, and the complete history is given again in shorter form in the four review lessons.

Subjects for Bible Class Discussion. Paul told the elders of Ephesus that he had shrunk not from declaring unto them anything that was profitable. In

adult Bible classes the lessons should be taught along broad lines that are profitable. "The Guide" gives present-day problems suggested by the lesson and references to treatments of the themes, chiefly in current periodicals which may be obtained in almost every public library.

Work to be Assigned. If there is a definite work expected of pupils, within their power to perform, regularly assigned and regularly called for in class, it will be done. "The Guide" gives each week questions that provoke thought or that require the use of the Bible. Simple questions on the lesson text teachers of young pupils will themselves make out. It is a good plan occasionally to assign the same questions to all the class, but usually there should be a division of labor. Write on slips of paper the work expected and give them to the pupils to take home. Such work will make pupils interested in the lesson and will lead them to ask and answer questions instead of merely listening to you. Keep always in mind in your teaching that of far greater importance than what you tell your pupils is what you lead your pupils to tell you.

Written Work. Younger pupils should be provided with blankbooks, which may be purchased or which they may make themselves by fastening large sheets of paper together with a cover of colored paper. A page should be given to each lesson. Before the lesson pupils should write the lesson date, title and golden text; and add a picture cut from their lesson quarterly or one of the many series of pictures that may be cheaply purchased, which illustrates some verse of the lesson, or they may themselves sometimes make a simple drawing that will recall the lesson, such as a crutch for lesson IV, a coin for lesson VI, stones for lesson VIII. After the lesson has been taught, they should write at home the story and the sentence sermon for the day. The books should be brought to class each week, and the teacher should read one of them aloud to the class and commend good work.

Older pupils should write a History of the Expansion of the Early Church, or a Life of Paul in which they include maps of his journeys. The written work suggested in the review lessons may be made a part of the weekly work.

THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Books. The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books; the four Gospels, the historical book of the Acts, the twenty-one letters, and the Apocalypse or Revelations.

The Authors. The twenty-seven books were probably written by nine authors, all of them Jews save Luke. Two of the four Evangelists who wrote the Gospels wrote also other books; Luke wrote the Acts, and to John are generally ascribed the three epistles, First, Second, and Third John, and the book of Revelations. Paul wrote thirteen of the letters, the Pauline Epistles as they are called; the author of Hebrews is unknown; and of the seven General Epistles, one is ascribed to James, two to Peter, three to John, and one to Jude. Three of these nine authors were among the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus—Matthew, John and Peter. Two, James and Jude, were apparently his brothers. Paul was especially called to his work by the Risen Christ. Mark is called by one of the early Christian writers "the Interpreter of Peter"; he was a companion of both Peter and Paul. Luke and probably the writer of Hebrews were companions of Paul.

The Themes. The Gospels tell us what Jesus the Christ did and said, they reveal the religion of Christ through His life and teachings. The Acts and the Epistles tell us what was the effect of Christ's life and teaching upon apostles and disciples, what Christ continued to do and to teach, as Luke says, through others, the Acts being a revelation of the acts of His disciples in extending His teachings, the Epistles being a revelation of the application of His teachings to individual and church life. Revelations proclaims the ultimate triumph of the faith in Jesus the Christ.

The Order. The order in which the books are given in the New Testament is not the order in which they were written. Because the events of Christ's life precede those of the early Christian Church, the Gospels naturally precede the Epistles in the New Testament arrangement, but we must not make the mistake of supposing that the Gospels in their present form were the earliest

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written of the New Testament books. Many scholars believe that the Epistle of James was the first in chronological order, but some scholars assign to it a later date. With this possible exception, the Pauline Epistles were the earliest written. The Synoptic Gospels were probably written before and the Gospel of John after, the Acts.

THE ACTS.

The Author. The book itself does not name the author. The writer, however, in his introductory sentences tells us that it is a continuation of a former work, and since he addresses it to a certain Theophilus, to whom also the third Gospel is addressed, and since the Acts resembles the third Gospel in vocabulary and style, it is believed that the author is Luke. The early Christian writers speak of Luke as the author of both books. The occasional use of the pronoun *we* shows that the writer was at times a companion of Paul on his journeys. From Paul's letters, which give the names of his chief companions and certain facts concerning them, it is learned that Luke must have been the companion who was with Paul on all the occasions recorded in the Acts in the "We-portions," or "Travel Documents," as they are called. These "Travel Documents" include the journey from Troas to Philippi, Acts 16.10-17; from Philippi to Jerusalem, Acts 20.5-21.18; and from Jerusalem to Rome, Acts 27.12-28.16.

Two theories are held in regard to the authorship of the Acts. Some critics believe that it was edited by an unknown writer of the second century from several documents, among them the Travel Documents which were probably written by Luke. The majority of scholars believe that Luke, the beloved physician, as Paul calls him, was the author of the entire book, and that the Travel Documents record the events of which he himself was an eye-witness. The first part of the history he could hear from others; the greater part of the second part he knew from his own experience. It has been shown that for all events in which Luke himself did not participate it is possible to point to a particular occasion on which he either visited the places where they occurred and therefore came in contact with those who could give first-hand testimony, or met the persons about whom the events are narrated.

The Date. Great divergence of opinion exists as to the probable date when this history was written. Because it contains no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem its date is placed by some before 70 A. D., but this inference is not conclusive. Because it records the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome its date may be given as subsequent to 63 A. D.

Reliability. Bishop Lightfoot has pointed out that the veracity of no ancient writing is so well tested as that of the Acts, because no other has such numerous points of contact in all directions with contemporary history, politics, and topography, whether Jewish, or Greek or Roman. The history of the Acts covers a period of thirty years, enacted in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. During that time political changes were frequent, and yet Luke is never found at fault, whether writing of imperial provinces or senatorial provinces, of proconsuls, procurators, politarchs, Asiarchs, or prætors, or of the Sanhedrin and Herodian princes and rulers of synagogues. Recently discovered inscriptions have proved him correct where formerly his statements were doubted.

The Aim and Contents of the Book. The full title of the book as given in the Authorized Version, The Acts of the Apostles, is misleading. The words, *of the Apostles,* are wanting in the Sinaitic manuscript, and were probably added in other manuscripts by the copyist. Aside from the list of the apostles given in 1.13, only three, Peter, James and Paul are mentioned again. The book is not a biography of the apostles. It is not an account of the acts, or lives, of even Peter and Paul. Peter disappears from the record after the fifteenth chapter, not because his work has ceased, but because the progress of Christianity left Peter and the Jewish field on one side and developed under Paul in the Gentile field.

The Acts is the history of the expansion of the early church. It is the story of men who had learned of Christ and were fulfilling His commission to teach the world. In his introduction Luke declares the purpose of his writing, and gives the three keynotes by which it is to be understood. As his former

work, his Gospel, is a record of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach until he was received up, so this work is (1) a record of what Jesus continued to do and to teach through His followers. Jesus had commanded them to be His witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The Acts records (2) how this command was fulfilled. This commandment to preach the gospel was given "through the Holy Spirit," and it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the command is obeyed. The Acts has been called (3) "the Gospel of the Holy Spirit," for His guidance is recognized at every step.

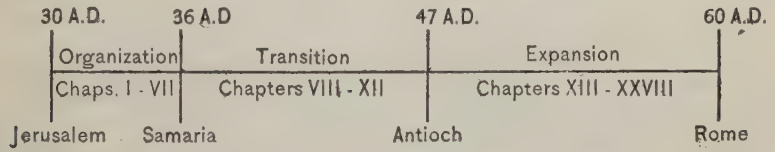
In the course of his narrative, Luke plainly shows the growth of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a world-wide religion; the freeing of Gentile Christianity from Jewish law; and the supreme greatness of Paul whose "acts" occupy three-fifths of the book.

No attempt is made to write a complete account of events. Some events are discribed with great fulness, some are but briefly mentioned, and some are omitted entirely. There is no record of the spread of the Gospel in Egypt or the farther East, nothing about the founding of the church at Rome, no word in regard to the later life of Peter, the trial and death of Paul, the persecution under Nero, or the destruction of Jerusalem.

Professor Ramsay thinks that "the former treatise" (Acts 1.1) means the first of a series of three, and that Luke's purpose was to write a third treatise dealing with the progress of the gospel from Rome. The ending of the book is, in truth, unsatisfactory, but it is a logical ending in that Luke fulfilled his purpose as given in his introduction. When Paul preached the gospel in Rome, the capital of the Roman world, the knowledge of Christ had been spread, prophetically at least, to the "uttermost part of the earth."

Style. It is a plain, unvarnished tale that Luke tells, and yet it is no bare recital, for with a few vigorous strokes he draws a succession of living pictures which show us a living church. He writes with enthusiasm for his subject, and with sympathetic insight into the feelings of others.

Analysis.



I. Introduction. 1.1-5.
II. The Church in Jerusalem. 1.6-7.60.
  1. The Ascension. 1.6-11.
  2. Waiting for the coming of the Spirit. 1.12-26.
  3. Day of Pentecost. 2.1-41.
  4. The growth and unity of the Church. 2.42-5.42.
  5. The choosing of the seven and the martyrdom of Stephen. 6.1-7.60.
III. The Church in Palestine and Syria. 8-12.
  1. The persecution that followed the death of Stephen. 8.1-3.
  2. The ministry of Philip. 8.4-40.
  3. The early experiences of Saul. 9.1-31.
  4. Peter at Lydda, Joppa, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem. 9.32-11.18.
  5. The founding of the church at Antioch and the persecution of the church at Jerusalem. 11.19-12.25.
IV. The Church in Asia Minor and Europe. 13-28.
  1. Paul's First Missionary Journey. 13.1-14.28.
  2. The granting of Gentile liberty. 15.1-35.
  3. Paul's Second Missionary Journey. 15.36-18.22.
  4. Paul's Third Missionary Journey. 18.23-21.16.
  5. Paul's last visit, arrest, and imprisonment at Jerusalem. 21.17-23.30.
  6. Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea. 23.31-26.32.
  7. Paul's Voyage to Rome. 27.1-28.15.
  8. Paul in Rome. 28.16-31.

PAUL THE HERO OF THE ACTS

The Need of Understanding Paul the Man. Nearly three-fourths of our lessons for the entire year are about Paul and his teachings. As we follow his experiences we can not help sympathizing with his suffering, sharing his ambitions, and rejoicing in his successes. His is a powerful personality, the most influential and inspiring, after Jesus the Christ, in the whole Bible history. No teacher except Christ has ever been studied as has Paul. To understand Paul's thought one must understand Paul the man, and understanding him, one better understands Christ, for it was not Paul that lived but Christ that lived in him (Gal. 2.20).

His Early Life. Paul's story in the Acts, save for the mention of his presence at the stoning of Stephen, begins with his conversion when he was perhaps thirty years of age, but from his own words we know something of his earlier life. By birth he was "a Hebrew of Hebrews," that is, both his parents were Hebrews, and he was proud of his nationality; he was born in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, Asia Minor, and was proud of his birthplace. Tarsus was a famous university town under Roman dominion and Greek influences, and life there had its effects on Paul, enabling him in later years to understand and adapt himself to cultivated Greeks and practical Romans. At Tarsus Paul learned tent-making, for it was the Jewish custom for all boys, in whatever circumstances in life, to learn some manual trade. We hear of his supporting himself by working at his trade afterwards at Corinth and Ephesus.

His Education at Jerusalem. He was sent to Jerusalem for his education, and he may have lived at the home of a married sister, whose son is mentioned in Acts 23. He was there "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel," the largest-hearted and most distinguished of all the Jewish rabbis, and he became rooted and grounded in the law and the Old Testament Scriptures. "As touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless," he said in referring to those days when he was a strict Pharisee, when religion to him meant obedience to forms, the keeping of the Sabbath and the Jewish fasts and feasts and multitudinous laws. It has been thought that his words in Acts 26.10 in regard to the persecuted Christians at Jerusalem—When they were put to death I gave my vote against them—imply that he was a member of the Sanhedrin.

Because he was a Roman citizen by birth, was sent to Jerusalem for his education, and was able to bear the expense of an appeal to Rome, Professor Ramsay supposes that his family had means which came to him in later life.

His Conversion to Christianity. On his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians, Paul met the vision that revolutionized his life, and changed him from a violent, fanatical Jew into a self-sacrificing, devoted Christian. The fiery zeal which he had shown in seeking to destroy the false religion, as he had supposed Christianity to be, was henceforth devoted with singleness of aim to the furthering of the true faith, as he then knew it to be. His life after he became launched on his great career which lasted for fully thirty years, is told in our lessons.

An Appreciation of Paul. Whatever Paul was, he was with his whole heart. This one thing I do, To me to live is Christ, are characteristic utterances of his. His sublime devotion to Christ, his desire to become like Christ, his zeal in serving Christ, are everywhere and always manifest. He is wholly controlled by his faith, faith in God, in the unseen and spiritual, and faith in himself as a commissioned apostle to the Gentiles, called of God. He was a strong, heroic, masterful character, and yet a man of sensitive temperament and wide and tender sympathies. He possessed the power of arousing the enthusiasm and love of others, such a power as only one with strong sympathies and affections could exert. Great in his mental gifts was Paul, in his clearness of insight into the truth, in his grasp of essentials, and great in his soundness of judgment, his delicacy of tact and courtesy, his loftiness of motive, his steadfastness of purpose, his indomitableness of will, his untiringness of zeal, his perfect fearlessness and self-poise, his sublime patience, his intense feeling and deep enthusiasm, his contagious friendliness and his complete sacrifice of self.

He was a born leader of men. His originality of thought made him a philosopher, his spiritual insight made him a theologian. New conditions and dif-

ficulties presented themselves wherever he went, but he was equal to any emergency, and whether talking to a few women by the riverside at Philippi, or to many philosophers on the Areopagus at Athens, he could do all things through Him who strengthened him.

And yet this intellectual giant—organizer and administrator, orator and theologian, prophet and seer— was intensely human, and it is perhaps his humanness that has endeared him most to countless multitudes of Christians. He had great visions and inspirations, but he lived on human levels. We see him not a saint but a man, with human weaknesses, impulsive, unyielding at times, of quick and vehement temper, and we see this man in many ordinary situations pressed on every side, yet not straightened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed. He represents human nature at its best, the nature toward which all may strive, for he could well say to the Corinthians, Be ye imitators of me even as I also am of Christ.

What he accomplished. When Paul began his labors, belief in Jesus Christ was confined to the small country of Palestine; when he died it had been grounded in the larger centers of population of the Eastern Mediterranean Roman world, and the followers of his Master had become a great Church destined to be the salt of the whole earth. Before him, the faith was limited to the Jewish sect; he separated Christianity from Judaism—although this was not his purpose—and made of it a world-wide religion. Said Clement, writing at Rome about the year 95, "Paul gained the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world."

And no man has controlled the religious thought of the world ever since as has Paul through his writings. "For eighteen centuries men have been speaking in interpretation of this inspired writer," says Dr. Lyman Abbott, "and they are likely to continue speaking in interpretation of him for centuries to come. Some men grope their way to truths. Some men rise like birds upon wings and looking down upon truth from above, see it spread out beneath them in God's sunlight; such a man was Paul."

"Did Paul's life end with his own life?" questions Dean Stanley, and then he answers: "May we not rather believe that in a sense higher than Chrysostom ever dreamt of when he gave him the glorious name of the Heart of the World, the pulses of that mighty heart are still the pulses of the world's life, still beat in these later ages with even greater force than ever?"

Dates in Paul's Life. The dates of important events in Paul's life can not be stated with certainty. Harnack gives as early a date as 30 A. D. to his conversion; Lightfoot as late a date as 68 to his death. His missionary activities covered twenty-five to twenty-eight years. The following table gives some of the leading views: the dates given by Turner in Hasting's Dictionary are the ones followed in this book.

	Lightfoot	Harnack	Ramsay	Turner
Conversion,	34	30	33	35, 36
First visit to Jerusalem,	37	33	35, 36	38
Second visit to Jerusalem,	45	44	46	46
First missionary journey,	48	45	47-49	47
Council at Jerusalem,	51	47	50	49
Second missionary journey,	51-54	47-50	50-53	49-52
Third missionary journey,	54-58	50-54	53-57	52-56
Arrest,	58	54	57	56
Rome reached,	61	57	60	59
At close of the Acts,	63	59	62	61
Death,	67, 68	64	65	64, 65

THE PAULINE EPISTLES AND HEBREWS

Their Number. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are in the form of letters, and of them thirteen are attributed to Paul. They fill only about seventy full pages of the standard edition of the Bible, and yet one might speak hyperbolically like John and say that if everything that has been said and written in regard to these letters were written and collected, "the whole world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

Their Relation to the Acts. The Epistles both supplement and confirm the Acts. In the Acts we have the external, objective history of the primitive church; in the epistles the subjective, internal record. The history and the letters agree in all essential points, but the letters tell about Paul's stay in Arabia, about the trouble with Peter at Antioch, about persecutions manifold, etc., not recorded in the history.

The Occasion of their Writing.

> There lies the letter, but it is not he
> As he retires unto himself and is;
> Sender and Sent-to go to make up this
> The offspring of their union,

declares Tennyson. In order to understand Paul's letters, we must understand Sent-to as well as Sender, for before him seems to have hovered the mental picture of the persons to whom he was writing, and his letter to the Philippians, for example, who were his friends, is a very different letter from that to the Romans, who were strangers to him. There are familiar references in his letters that were plain to his first readers, but not understandable now. We may imagine that in replying to a letter received from one of his churches he held that letter in his hand and followed point after point as he dictated his answer to his scribe or secretary, perhaps repeating some of its very words.

We must know the circumstances that led to the writing of each of his letters, when, where, and for what purpose it was written, and what his readers expected or needed. Seven were written to churches he himself had founded, two—Colossians and Romans—to other churches, and four—First and Second Timothy, Titus and Philemon—to individuals.

They are the personal letters of a friend to friends, written in response to some question, or occasioned by some personal matter or some particular difficulty or threatening danger. They were written to strengthen faith, to rebuke sins, to instruct, to exhort. They were composed in the midst of great persecutions and dangers, while engaged in incessant missionary labors, and yet they are instinct with Paul's loving sympathy and keen interest in the welfare of his distant readers.

Their Form. The letters have certain features in common. They begin with an inscription and words of greeting. The first part of the body of the letter contains Paul's doctrinal discussions, his profound theology, and then, usually with a connecting "therefore"—for Paul's faith must lead to conduct—the letter passes to his practical instructions, his principles of conduct. The letters generally close with personal words and a benediction.

Their Themes. The letters are full of profound thoughts stamped with their writer's own individuality, tingling with his own life. They discuss the highest themes; God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, atonement, resurrection, repentance, regeneration, faith, judgment. "That Paul gave form to the teaching of Christ is evident," said Dr. Alexander McKenzie; "but they are mistaken who think he altered the teaching itself. He expanded the central teaching of Christ, that he had come to seek and to save that which was lost; and he defined the loss, and the seeking and the saving. He taught in what way and for what reasons the Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. He declared the resurrection of the dead in words which remain the clearest exposition of Immortality. He exalted love and enforced it in the finest sentences ever written concerning it. He guided the churches in their affairs and in the behavior of their members. He had learned the mind of Christ. This was his claim for himself."

Their Literary Style. Paul's literary style is many-sided like Paul himself. At one time he is logical, at another mystical, and again intensely practical. His language is now terse, now rough and abrupt, now gentle and tender, but always forcible. As Luther says, "His words are not dead words, they are living creatures, and have hands and feet." At times his language is singularly beautiful, as in our lesson from First Corinthians. To use the figure of a German writer, his tender, loving phrases are scattered like sweet-smelling flowers over the rugged, stony slopes of his letters.

His writings abound in bold antitheses and sudden turnings, digressions and corrections. Some of his sentences are broken or so involved that one must

agree with Peter that in his epistles are "some things hard to be understood"; the reason for his involved sentences may be seen in the fact that he did not write and revise, but he dictated his words, speaking as he thought. In his calmer moods his words flowed smoothly, but when passionately in earnest—this man who believed and therefore spoke—his words poured forth in a torrent, and he felt the inadequacy of language to express his thought. Then, too, he thought over a truth in all its aspects, and expressed his thoughts as they came to him. When the letter was finished he seems to have sometimes added a postscript himself—as when, troubled with weak eyes, he wrote to the Galatians, "See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand"—but there was always urgent work to be done in his present field of labor, and he had no time to read and correct his scribe's work.

Their Inspiration. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, are the confident words of the apostles in the first Christian letter. The love of Christ constraineth us, are words of Paul to the Corinthians that apply to his writings.

"All his glowing language issued forth
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth."

While many themes that occupied Paul's attention have now lost their force—such as the question whether a Christian should eat meat that had been offered to idols—yet the general principles of religious conduct by which he settled troublesome questions are as helpful now as when they were first written, as applicable to us as to the ones to whom they were addressed. Though written in special emergencies for a special people, with all the anxious thought and care of a pastor, these letters have their messages for all ages and all peoples. They contain truths for all time. The proof of their inspiration is that they have inspired Christian faith throughout more than eighteen hundred years.

Their Chronological Order. The order in which Paul's letters are printed in the New Testament is not the order in which they were written. The longest letters are given first, and perhaps at the time the arrangement was made the supposed order of importance of the churches and individuals to whom the letters were written had an influence on their order of presentation. The right way in which to read and study them is the historical order. They fall chronologically into four groups.

1. The two letters to the Thessalonians, written during Paul's second missionary journey.

2. The four Great Epistles—Galatians, the two to the Corinthians, and Romans—written during Paul's stay at Ephesus and his visit to the churches in Greece, on his third missionary journey.

3. The Epistles of the Captivity—Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians and Philippians—written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome.

4. The Pastoral Epistles—the two Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus—written during the period between Paul's liberation from his first Roman imprisonment and his death.

The Letters from which we have No Lessons. These may be thus briefly characterized: Second Thessalonians was written to correct a misunderstanding that arose from Paul's words in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians regarding the second coming of Christ; Galatians is a treatment of the relationship of the Gentiles to the Jewish law; Colossians discusses the pre-eminence of Christ, His mediatorial work; Philemon is a beautiful little personal letter; Ephesians is one of Paul's most profound letters and deals with "the church of the Lord;" Philippians is a joyous personal leter written in recognition of gifts received from that church; First Timothy and Titus contain directions in regard to the care of churches.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians

Place and Date of Writing. During his second missionary journey (Acts 17), Paul established a church of great promise at Thessalonica, now the Turkish town of Salonica. Opposition of the Jews compelled Paul to leave. At Athens he learned that the church was suffering persecution, and he longed to visit them, but being prevented from doing so—"hindered by Satan" he says—he sent Timothy there in his stead. Timothy returned to him at Corinth with

an encouraging report of their faith and loyalty, and from that city Paul wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians, the earliest of his writings, and, unless the letter of James is an exception, the earliest writings in the New Testament. The exact date depends on the system of chronology followed, perhaps 52 A. D., though some say a year or two earlier, and others a year later.

Purpose and Character. First Thessalonians is chiefly a friendly, personal letter, with very little theology. One passage (4.13-5.11) reassures them in regard to Christians who had died. It is full of tender, earnest affection for the inexperienced converts; commends their hospitality and Christian activity and brave endurance of trials to which they were subjected by their enemies; and exhorts them to live in a manner worthy of their faith, following after that which is good.

The Letter of the Thessalonians. Professor J. Rendel Harris, writing in the *Expositor,* shows by a comparison of many papyri that the expressions of a letter are repeated in its answer. He has constructed the following interesting letter, purporting to have been written to Paul by the Thessalonians, of which his First Epistle to the Thessalonians is an answer:—

The Church of the Thessalonians to the beloved Paul, greeting: We give thanks to God on thy behalf continually, and have an increasing remembrance of thee in our prayers, desiring earnestly to see thy face, for thy entrance to us hath not been in vain; but thou hast spoken to us the words of God in truth, without flattery and without covetousness, and we remember thy labor and thy toil on our behalf.

And we have turned from the worship of dead idols to serve a true and living God, and to wait for the return of His Son from heaven. And we have become imitators of thee and of the churches of God in Judea, and of thy patience and of theirs in those afflictions whereunto we are appointed. And thou hast been to us as a nursing father, even as Moses carried the people in the wilderness, exhorting us to walk worthily of the kingdom and glory of God. And even as thou didst declare to us that we should suffer for the kingdom of God, so it came to pass.

But we desire to know concerning them that are fallen asleep before the coming of the day of God, and what will be their portion when that day cometh suddenly as a thief upon the inhabitants of the earth, etc., etc.

All our friends salute thee.

Analysis.

I. Salutation. 1.1.
II. Paul's experiences with the church and Timothy's mission. 1.2-3.13.
III. Exhortations and Instructions. 4.1-5.24.
  1. Immortality. 4.1-8.
  2. Brotherly Love. 4.9-12.
  3. The dead in Christ and the coming of Christ. 4.13-5.11.
  4. Various exhortations. 5.12-22.
IV. Benediction. 5.23,24.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians

Place, Date and Purpose of Writing. During Paul's second missionary journey, he spent eighteen months in Corinth, the wealthy capital of the Roman province of Achaia, or Greece. A great church arose during this time Three or four years passed. News had meanwhile been brought him through various sources that the church was in great difficulties. Factions and disputes and evil practices had arisen. There was great jealousy between the Jews and the Gentiles. The Gentiles carried their view of freedom to the extreme. The Judaizing party had called in question Paul's authority. Paul wrote a warning letter (5.9) which has been lost. Those who had remained loyal to him wrote for further instruction (16.7). His answer is our First Epistle to the Corinthians, written from Ephesus during his third missionary journey, perhaps 54 A. D. It was sent in his own name and that of Sosthenes, the latter perhaps the scribe to whom he dictated it.

Character. The topics which the letter discusses are separated from one another in the American Revised Version by extra spacing. Paul met each

query by a statement of a broad, general principle that should guide conduct. The letter shows his penetrating insight, profound reflexions, and practical wisdom, and gives us the best picture we have of the institutions and opinions of the earliest Christian churches.

The two great chapters are the thirteenth, the pæan of love, and the fifteenth, about the resurrection.

Analysis.

I. Salutation and introduction. 1.1-9.
II. The complaints against the church. 1.10-6.20.
  1. Factions. 1.10-4.21.
  2. Immoralities. 5.1-6.20.
III. The questions asked by the church. 7.1-14.20.
  1. Marriage. 7.1-40.
  2. Heathen feasts. 8.1-11.1.
  3. Public worship. 11.2-34.
    a. Conduct of women. 11.2-16.
    b. Lord's Supper. 11.17-34.
  4. Spiritual gifts. 11-14.
    a. Love the greatest of all. 13.
IV. Immortality and the resurrection. 15.
V. Conclusion. 16.
  1. Collection for Jerusalem. 16.1-4.
  2. Personal matters. 16.5-24.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians

Place and Date of Writing. Second Corinthians was written during Paul's third missionary journey, probably while in Macedonia, about the year 55 A. D.

Two Theories. It speaks of earlier letters written to the Corinthian church, which can not well be made to fit into the record of Paul's life given in the Acts. It is generally thought that another severely-worded letter, the letter which caused Paul such keen anxiety that he regretted writing it (2 Cor. 7.8), has been lost, though some scholars think that part of it has come down to us in the last four chapters of Second Corinthians. The severe reproof of these chapters follows somewhat strangely the kindly wording of the first nine chapters, but an interval of time between the writing of the two parts of the letter and new circumstances might account for the changed tone.

Purpose and Character. Titus had brought Paul word that his letter had been well received by the majority of Christians at Corinth, and also the information that a minority of Jews refused to submit to his authority and were actively engaged in undermining his work. This news was probably the occasion for the writing of Second Corinthians. Three chief thoughts seem to have filled Paul's mind as he wrote: gratitude for the good reception of his letter, indignation at the insinuations of his opponents, and desire of hastening the collection of money for the relief of the poor in Judea. It is the most personal and least orderly of his letters. It reveals his feelings, his trials and joys, his earnestness and love. Dr. Lyman Abbott suggests that while his other letters might be called sermons or addresses, this must be called a prayer-meeting talk.

Analysis.

I Salutation and introduction. 1.1-11.
II. Paul's relations with the Corinthians.
  1. His motives. 1.12-14.
  2. His postponed visit. 1.15-2.4.
  3. Forgiveness of the offender. 2.5-11.
  4. His reason for going to Macedonia. 2.12,13.
  5. His success, the Corinthians his commendation. 2.14-3.4.
III. Paul's first defence. 3.4-7.16.
  1. The old ministry and the new. 3.4-4.6.
  2. Human weakness and divine strength. 4.7-6.10.
  3. His appeal to the Corinthians. 6.11-7.16.

IV. The collection for the poor in Judea. 8.1-9.15.
  1. Example of Macedonian churches. 8.1-7.
  2. Completion of collection at Corinth. 8.8-9.5.
  3. The true spirit of giving. 9.6-15.
V. Paul's second defence; his self-vindication. 10.1-12.10.
  1. His assertion of authority. 10.1-18.
  2. His fear of their loyalty. 11.1-15.
  3. His labors and sufferings. 11.16-33.
  4. His visions. 12.1-10.
VI. Conclusion. 12.11-13.14.
  1. Warnings. 12.11-13.10.
  2. Farewell and benediction. 13.11-14.

The Epistle to the Romans

Place and Date of Writing. The origin of the church at Rome is unknown; it may have been founded by the "Sojourners from Rome" who were among those who "believed" at Pentecost. Paul's letter was written during his three months' stay at Corinth toward the close of his third missionary journey, probably shortly before he started on his last journey to Jerusalem, after which "he must see Rome," 50 A. D. The scribe to whom he dictated the letter was called Tertius; the messenger by whom it was sent was Phœbe, a deaconess of Cenchreæ.

Purpose. Paul had watched the Roman church, and had recognized its importance in the capital of the empire whence the gospel might radiate to all the world. His letter was designed to win the confidence of its members, for he was not personally known to them, and was to prepare the way for his long desired visit.

Character. Romans is the most deliberately and carefully worded, the most elaborate and systematic, of Paul's writings. It is the least personal of his letters, and is, in fact, more of a treatise than a letter. At a very early date it was published in two forms—as it appears in our Bibles, and also with all the personal references omitted as a treatise for all churches.

In Romans, unlike in his other letters, Paul was not treating questions called up by letters from the church or circumstances in the church, but he was carrying out independent trains of thought in which he was supremely interested.

Romans is Paul's greatest theological writing. It contains his statement of the fundamental principles of his teaching, the significance of the chief facts of Christian faith. It is "the gospel according to Paul." Coleridge calls it "the profoundest book in existence;" Godet, "the cathedral of the Christian faith."

It gives a logical development of the gospel announced by Christ; its harmony with the revelation given in the Old Testament; its application to life. The keynote is 1.16: the gospel, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

So true are its denunciations of sin, so much needed in every age, that when Dr. Ashmore translated it into the Chinese language, the Chinese people said to him: "You wrote this since you came. In this book you are writing against us."

Analysis.

I. Salutation and introduction. 1.1-15.
II. The Gospel of God for the world. 1.16-8.39.
  1. The subject stated. 1.16, 17.
  2. Universal sinfulness. 1.18-3.20.
  3. The message of salvation. 3.21-31.
  4. Its proof. 4.1-5.21.
  5. Its results. 6.1-8.39.
III. The Jews' rejection of salvation. 9.1-11.36.
  1. Paul's sorrow. 9.1-5.
  2. The original word to Israel. 9.6-29.

3. Their own responsibility for their rejection. 9.30-10.21.
4. The rejection partial and temporary. 11.1-36.

IV. Practical lessons for daily life. 12.1-15.13.
1. Self-dedication, humility, mutual love. 12.1-21.
2. Obedience to authority. 13.1-7.
3. Love the fulfilment of the law. 13.8-10.
4. Salvation at hand. 13.11-14.
5. Respect for convictions of others. 14.1-15.13.

V. Conclusion. 15.14-16.27.
1. Personal matters. 15.14-33.
2. Phœbe. 16.1,2.
3. Words of salutation and warning. 16.3-23.
4. Doxology. 16.25-27.

The Second Epistle to Timothy

Purpose. The two leters to Timothy and one to Titus, favorite pupils and fellow-workers of Paul, contain his fatherly counsels and are very confidential in tone. They are called the Pastoral Epistles, because they give directions for the founding and governing of churches and the treatment of members, addressed to these younger friends in their official capacity of pastors.

Date and Place of Writing. First Timothy and Titus were written when Paul was free and refer to journeys not recorded in the Acts, while Second Timothy was written from a Roman cell. A satisfactory hypothesis accepted by many scholars is that Paul was released from the imprisonment at Rome recorded in the Acts, and spent three or four years in journeys during which he wrote First Timothy and Titus, and that Second Timothy was written during his final imprisonment at Rome on the eve of his martyrdom.

Character. Second Timothy is more personal than pastoral in its nature, and is Paul's "last will and testament," written when he was expecting soon to receive his crown of righteousness (4.8). Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother, who joined Paul on his second missionary journey. According to tradition he was in charge of the church at Ephesus.

Analysis.

I. Salutation and Introduction. 1.1-18.

II. Counsels to Timothy. 2.1-4.8.
1. Be a true soldier of Christ. 2.1-13.
2. Avoid controversy. 2.14-26.
3. Threatening dangers. 3.1-17.
4. Last words. 4.1-8.

III. Conclusion. 4.9-22.
1. Personal messages. 4.9-21.
2. Benediction. 4.22.

The Epistle to the Hebrews

Author. Between the Pauline and the General Epistles in our Bibles is the Epistle to the Hebrews. By whom or to what particular church this Epistle was written is not known. It has been attributed to various writers—Paul, Paul and one of his pupils, Barnabas, Silvanus, Apollos, or Clement of Rome. It is addressed to Christian believers belonging to the race of Israel, perhaps to the church at Jerusalem, at Alexandria, or at Rome.

Purpose. Hebrews is argumentative in style, and is more of a theological discourse than of a letter. Its purpose is the strengthening of Christian faith, the keeping of Hebrew Christians from apostasy.

Character. "When I turn to this great Epistle," Dr. J. H. Jowett says, "I feel as though I were in the inspiring spaces of some great cathedral, as though I were moving about Westminster Abbey; in fact, I have ventured to call the Epistle to the Hebrews the Westminster Abbey of the Bible. There are some beautiful little side chapels, where a weary soul can bend in quiet and reverent prayer and praise; some most winsome light breaks through quite

unexpected windows, as you move about in the august place; again and again you hear the sound of an anthem raising melodious songs of praise to the great God; and you are never allowed to get far away from Calvary and the cross. When I come to Chapter eleven I always feel as though I were turning into the nave of the great cathedral, and I find it is occupied by monuments which have been erected to commemorate saintly men and women who were distinguished by their faith,—a monument to Abraham, a monument to Isaac and Jacob; a monument to Sarah, one to Rahab."

Analysis.

I. Christ's superiority. 1.1-8.13.
   1. To the angels. 1.1-2.18.
   2. To Moses and Joshua. 3.1-4.13.
   3. The High Priesthood of Jesus and the high priesthood of the first covenant. 4.14-8.13.

II. The superiority of the new covenant to the old. 9.1-10.18.
III. Encouragement and Warning. 10.19-39.
IV. Faith and the heroes of faith. 11.1-40.
V. Exhortations. 12.1-13.17.
VI. Conclusion. 13.18-25.

THE GENERAL EPISTLES JAMES

The General Epistles. The Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude are called Catholic or General Epistles because they are not written to individuals or to special churches (with the exception of Second and Third John), but to Christians in general. It is believed by many scholars that the Epistle of James was written before 50 A. D., the two of Peter and one of Jude before 67, and those of John before 90 and 100. Unlike Paul's letters, they do not contain theological discussions, but present simpler statements of religious truths.

The Epistle of James

Author. There are three prominent men in the New Testament by the name of James; James the son of Zebedee and brother of John, the apostle who was put to death by Herod about 44 A. D. (Acts 12.2); James the son of Alphæus, called James the Less (Mark 15.40), another apostle; and James the brother of Jesus (Matt. 13.55), who according to very early tradition was the bishop of the Christian church at Jerusalem. The Epistle of James is generally believed the work of James the brother of Jesus. Josephus says that he was stoned to death as a "breaker of the law," *i. e.* a Christian, in 63 A. D.

Date. The Epistle is held by many to have been the earliest written of the New Testament books, but it is assigned by some scholars to a much later date. It is addressed to the "Twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," the Jewish Christians who lived outside of Palestine.

Purpose and Character. Only the superscription reminds one of a letter. While one purpose animates the whole, there is little connection between the sections. Writing to those who conceived religion to be a matter of opinion rather than of character and conduct, who were hearers rather than doers of the word, James lays stress on right living, teaching that Christian morality is essential to salvation.

The Epistle is eminently practical, and is written in vigorous, epigrammatic style, abounding in similes and metaphors. Professor Moulton calls it "a miscellany of Wisdom literature." Its resemblance in sentiment and expressions to the Sermon on the Mount is often remarked.

Analysis.

I. Salutation. 1.1.
II. Exhortations. 1.2-27.
   Steadfastness in trials, 1.2-4; praying in faith, 1.5-8; wealth and poverty, 1.9-11; temptations, 1.12-18; practical religion, 1.19-27.

III. Warnings. 2.1-5.6.
Undue regard for wealth, 2.1-13; inactive faith, 2.14-26; control of tongue, 3.1-12; true wisdom, 3.13-18; contentiousness, 4.1-12; presumption, 4.13-17; self-indulgence, 5.1-6.
IV. Conclusion. 5.7-20.
Christian patience, 5.7-11; avoid oaths, 5.12; power of prayer, 5.13-18; saving a soul, 5.19,20.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE ACTS

Extent. While the Roman Empire reached from the Thames to the Euphrates, and from the Rhine to the African desert and Persian Gulf, it was the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea which were for Luke, the writer of the Acts, the whole world. The barbarous frontiers of the Empire and the rival kingdoms of the East did not exist for him. When Paul preached the gospel at Rome, the capital of that Empire, it had reached the center of the civilized world and, therefore, prophetically, the uttermost part of the earth.

Divisions and Government. The Empire was divided into provinces of two classes, imperial and senatorial. The governor of an imperial province was appointed by the emperor himself, and was called a prefect or a procurator. The governor of a senatorial province was appointed by the senate, and was called a proconsul. Two proconsuls, Gallio and Sergius Paulus, and two procurators, Felix and Festus, are mentioned in the Acts. Roman governors and Roman law protected Paul from popular violence and from the persecutions of his own nation.

Roman colonies were cities that were regarded as extensions of Rome itself. Their citizens possessed the Roman citizenship, they were ruled by their own magistrates, who were called prætors or generals, and they had their own senate and constitution modelled after those of Rome. Among the colonies where Paul labored were Antioch of Pisidia, Troas, Philippi, and Corinth.

At the head of the Roman Empire was the Cæsar, or Emperor, an absolute despot. Augustus, the first Cæsar, died in 14 A. D. Four successive Cæsars ruled during the history of the Acts:

Tiberius, 14-37.	Caligula, 37-41.
Claudius, 41-54.	Nero, 54-68.

The territory covered in the Acts reaches from Jerusalem to Rome, and includes the provinces of Syria, Cyprus, several in Asia Minor, and Macedonia, Achaia and Italy in Europe.

Syria was one of the wealthiest and most important of the Roman provinces. Its capital, Antioch, was the third city in the Empire. Syria included Cilicia on the northwest, which was cut off from Asia Minor by the Tarsus mountains, and Judea on the south.

Judea was from 41 to 44 A. D. an independent kingdom under the rule of King Herod Agrippa I, but during the rest of the history of the Acts it was a Roman province under a procurator, who was appointed by the Emperor, but was subject to the prefect of Syria. Jerusalem, the Holy City, was its capital.

Cyprus, the island, was the first Roman province visited by Paul after leaving Antioch of Syria.

Galatia. There were seven Roman provinces in Asia Minor, but the scenes in the Acts were mainly located in Galatia and Asia.

Galatia, a province in the central part of the peninsula, underwent many changes during the first century. It included various territories—Galatia proper, Phrygian Galatia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Iconium—all of which are mentioned in the Acts—and the territory of the King of Commagene.

Asia extended along the western coast of Asia Minor. It included Mysia, Lydia and Caria, and Phrygian Asia, and had numerous prosperous cities. Ephesus was the capital.

Macedonia, or Northern Greece, had for its capital the city of Thessalonica. It was divided into four districts, and of one of them Philippi was the capital.

Achaia was the province which included the whole of the Peloponnesus and the

greater part of Greece proper, with the nearby islands. Corinth was its capital. Athens was a free city.

Italy. Here was Rome, the capital of the Empire, to which all roads, all lines of commerce, led, where was set in motion the whole military and civil administration of the Empire, the center of the world.

The Fulness of Time. When the fulness of time came, God sent forth His Son, Paul declares in his Epistle to the Galatians. That the fulness of time had come, the period when the world was prepared to receive the advent of the truth, is seen in the conditions existing in the Roman Empire. Without the peace, the security, the ease and regularity of communication by land and sea, and a universal language and law, the gospel could not have spread from Jerusalem to Rome in so brief a space of time.

The famous military roads built by the soldiers connected Rome with all parts of her Empire, and by relays of horses carriers sped on their way from the golden milestone at Rome to the most distant provinces at the rate of a hundred miles a day. It was along these safe lines of travel that Paul's journeys took him and his churches were established—whence the gospel could radiate to less favored situations. Ships, too, were constantly plying between Rome and the Mediterranean ports. According to Professor Ramsay, traveling was more highly developed, and the dividing power of distance was weaker, under the Empire than at any time before or since, until we come down to the present era.

While many languages and dialects were spoken by the common people throughout the Empire, Greek was the language of culture everywhere; without this universal language, the apostles could not have made themselves understood in all parts of the realm.

The dispersion of the Jews also had prepared the way for the spread of the gospel. These Hellenists, or Greek-speaking Jews, were found in all the chief cities of the world, and everyhere they had won proselytes from the Gentiles, who fulfilled all the Jewish requirement, including circumcision, and they had gained also a following of "devout persons," Gentiles who worshiped God but did not adopt the Jewish customs. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures, had been widely circulated. Among these "devout persons" in their distant synagoguges the gospel had a ready hearing.

The fulness of time had come when the gospel could be preached in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
ROMAN EMPIRE
at the Death of
HEROD AGRIPPA I, A.D. 44
Longitude East from Greenwich
ROME
Three Taverns
Market of Appius
Capua
Via Appia
Puteoli
ITALY
Apennines
ADRIATIC SEA
Dyrrachium
Brundisium
Tarentum
IONIAN SEA
SICILY
Messina
Rhegium
Syracuse
MELITA (MALTA)
DALMATIA
MOESIA
ILLYRICUM
Via Egnatia
MACEDONIA
Pindus Range
Mt. Olympus
Berœa
Thessalonica
Apollonia
Amphipolis
Philippi
Neapolis
SAMOTHRACE
THRACE
BLACK SEA
Sangarius R.
Byzantium
Propontis
BITHYNIA AND PONTUS
PAPHLAGONIA
Halys R.
Tavium
KINGDOM OF POLEMON
Ancyra
Pessinus
GALATIA
Cæsarea
CAPPADOCIA
Tyana
Antitaurus Range
Pyramus
Cilician Gates
ANTIOCHUS
DOMMAGENE
Lystra
Iconium
Derbe
Taurus Mts.
KINGDOM OF ANTIOCHUS
CILICIA CAMPESTRIS
Tarsus
Syrian Gates
Antioch
Seleucia
Cyanus R.
Orontes R.
SYRIA AND CILICIA AND PHŒNICIA
Laodicea
Salamis
CYPRUS
Paphos
Tripolis
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Ptolemais
Cæsarea
Samaria
Joppa
Lydda
Jerusalem
KINGDOM OF HEROD
Alexandria
EGYPT
LIBYA
CYRENE
Cyrene
SYRTIS
CRETE
C. Salmone
Fair Havens
Phœnice
CAUDA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ACHAIA OR GREECE
Corinth
Athens
Mt. Ida
MYSIA
Troas
Assos
Adramyttium
LESBOS
Mitylene
Pergamum
Thyatira
ASIA
ASIAN PHRYGIA
Sardis R.
Philadelphia
Apamea
Antioch
Hierapolis
LYDIA
Smyrna
CHIOS
Ephesus
SAMOS
PATMOS
Miletus
CARIA
COS
Cnidus
Rhodes
RHODES
Patara
Myra
LYCIA
Pergæ
Attalia
Side
PISIDIA
PAMPHYLIA
Taurus Mts.
Cestrus R.
Cyrene
Longitude East from Greenwich
16°
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24°
28°
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36°
40°
32°
36°
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LESSONS FOR 1909

ACTS AND EPISTLES

EXPANSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

FIRST QUARTER

LESSON I—JANUARY 3

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Read Acts 1.1-14. Commit verses 8, 9.

Golden Text

And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. Luke 24.51.

LESSON TEXT Acts 1.1-11

1 The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, 2 until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: 4 and, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, *said he,* ye heard from me: 5 for John indeed baptized them with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. 8 But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *The former treatise.* The Greek words πρῶτον λόγον mean literally the *first word.* The reference is to the Gospel according to Luke. Compare the introduction in Luke 1.1-4.—*I made.* I, Luke.—*O Theophilus.* Nothing is know about this man to whom Luke dedicated both his Gospel and the Acts; in Luke 1.3 he is called "most excellent Theophilus," a phrase corresponding, perhaps, to the English phrase "Your Excellency."—*That I began to do and to teach.* This may mean that the Gospel of Luke narrates all that Jesus both did and taught from the beginning; or it may imply that the Gospel of Luke contains an account of the beginning of Jesus' influence, of His work and

teachings while on earth, and the Book of Acts contains an account of the continuation of Jesus' influence, of His ministry through the apostles.

2. *Received up.* See Luke 24.50, 51.—*He had given commandment through the Holy Spirit.* See Matt. 28.19, 20; Mark 16.15-18; Luke 24.49; John 20.21-23; 21.15-17.—*The apostles whom he had chosen.* See Luke 6.13-16.

3. *His passion.* His suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross. Our word *passion* comes from the Latin *passio,* suffering.—*Proofs.* There is only one word in the Greek, and the Revised Version omits the adjective *infallible.*—*The kingdom of God.* This phrase occurs thirty-three times in Luke's Gospel. The things concerning the kingdom which Christ spoke between His resurrection and ascension are recorded in Matt. 28.19, 20; Mark 16.15-18; Luke 24.27, 44, 45; John 20.21; Acts 1.4-8. With verses 3-14 compare Luke 24.36-53.

4. *Being assembled together with them.* Probably in Galilee, Matt. 28.16.—*The promise of the Father.* The gift of the Holy Spirit. See Luke 24.49; John 15.26.—*Ye heard from me.* See Luke 12.11, 12; John 14.16.

5. *Baptized with water.* See Luke 3.16; John 3.5.—*Not many days hence.* Ten days intervened between the ascension and the baptism in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

6. *Restore the kingdom to Israel.* On the way to Jerusalem they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear (Luke 19.11), and now after the crucifixion they still cherish the false Jewish expectation of "the kingdom" as the rule of Israel.

8. *My witnesses.* The Acts records the history of the fulfillment of this commission.—*In Jerusalem.* The work in Jerusalem is told in chapters 1-6.—*All Judea.* As used here, Judea means Palestine without Samaria.—*Samaria.* The work in Judea and Samaria is told in chapters 8-9.31. *Uttermost part of the earth.* Represented by Rome, the capital of the Empire, the place where, as Irenaeus said, "All meet from every quarter." The record is given in 11.19-28.30.

9. *As they were looking.* See Luke 24.51.—*A cloud.* Seemingly the Shekinah of the Old Testament. Chrysostom calls it "the royal chariot." See John 6.62.

10. *In white apparel.* The usual way in which angels are described, white being the emblem of heavenly purity. See John 20.12.

11. *In like manner.* His going was a disappearing, a withdrawal from sight. His coming is an appearing, a manifesting of Himself.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

5. *The Holy Spirit.* The truest conception of the Spirit, as it existed in the mind of the most penetrating thinker of the apostolic age, is that of the *alter-ego* of the Exalted Christ. He is the one through whom Christ can continue in immediate, living touch with every one of His dependants. He is as truly divine as Christ Himself is. Indeed, when He is so closely linked at once with God and Christ, His divinity becomes one of the best proofs of the nature and reality of the divinity of Christ. *Robert Drummond,* in *The Relation of the Apostolic Teaching to the Teaching of Christ.*

6. *Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* We learn from this inquiry how long-lingering, how all but ineradicable, is the influence of first impressions. The disciples had got it into their minds very early in their Christian thinking that this Man Christ Jesus had come to liberate the Jews from their servitude and oppression, and to give them back their lost kingdom. That was probably the very first idea they had about Jesus Christ and His purpose, and they never could get rid of it. What is so long-lived as prejudice? What is so difficult to get away from as the first impression we form of one another, of any policy, purpose, thought, or action? How difficult for the mind to forget a first name, how all but impossible to substitute the new address for the old, how difficult for the hand in January to write the new year—the fingers seem to conspire to write again the familiar date. What we know by this common illustration, we may also know to be true of all higher intellectual and spiritual meditations and engagements. Therefore, take care what impression you make upon the young mind about the Christian Sabbath, the Christian Book, the Christian Church, and the Christian idea in all its bearings. Who can wonder that some men hardly can open the Bible with sympathy or hopefulness, because

they remember that in early days it was the task book? Are there not those who quite dread the idea of going to church, because that action is associated in their mind with early impressions of gloom and dreariness and heaviness not to be borne? Was not the church in early days a dark place, and was not the minister a man gifted only with the one faculty of wearying those who paid attention to him; and was not the whole Sabbath a trouble and a burden? Had it been associated with light, music, gladness, joy, the memory of those early engagements would have gone right through all the whole compass of the life, and at the last the pilgrim would have said, "Open unto me the gates of righteousness: I will enter into them and will be glad." *Joseph Parker,* in *Apostolic Life as Revealed in the Acts of the Apostles.*

8. *The uttermost part of the earth.*

Jesus shall reign wher'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till suns shall rise and set no more. *Isaac Watts.*

9. *He was taken up.* One might ask, Whither did our Lord go when He took His departure from this earthly scene? It would be a very childish notion to say that He went up and up, far above the most distant star. We all know, to-day, that there is neither up nor down in this visible universe. If we were transported to the moon, we would see the earth shining over our heads. We sometimes speak of Heaven as "up" somewhere beyond the stars, as though if we went up far enough, we should come to it. But this is merely a conventional form of speech. It has the same significance as to say the sun rises. The sun, in reality, never rises. The Heaven is neither up somewhere nor down somewhere. In the ascension of Christ we are told that He was taken up; but this is only an accommodation of language. It is no more an accurate form of expression than to say that the sun rises. What was the ascension in reality? It was Christ passing from the seen world to the unseen world. *George H. Ide.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *The apostles whom he had chosen.* The Greek word for *apostle* is derived from a verb and a preposition meaning *to send away.* An apostle is *one sent, a messenger.* This was a name already given at this time to synagogue officials who were sent to other synagogues on any important mission.

3. *He showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs.* At this time there were four conceptions of the future: first, absorption into God; second, transmigration of souls, or living in another body; third, living in one's own body, embalmed for the purpose, or gathered from the four winds of heaven by a miracle at the resurrection, at the last day; and fourth, life in a disembodied state in a shadowy underworld. Out of the resurrection of Christ there grew a fifth conception respecting the future life: a strong, firm belief in the personal resurrection and the personal immortal life of the dead, based upon and inspired by faith in the fact that Jesus Christ had died and had arisen again from the dead. *Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life and Letters of Paul.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During His public ministry, owing to the hostility of Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus had not won the multitudes, and at His death His immediate followers numbered only a few hundred. He had, however, accomplished far more for His cause in taking complete possession of a few lives, awakening in these chosen disciples a firmly-grounded faith in Him as the Messiah, and instructing and inspiring them so that they could continue His work after His departure. This intensive work Luke recorded in his Gospel; the extensive work, the spreading abroad of the good news, he recorded in the Acts.

The date of the ascension is May 18, A. D. 30.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

A week after His resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples a second time at Jerusalem (John 20.26), and later they talked with their risen Lord on the

shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 21.14). Again He met them in Jerusalem, probably in that upper chamber where the Last Supper was held, and then after a farewell discourse He led them out of the city, across the brook Kidron, and up the Mount of Olives till they were facing Bethany (Luke 24.50), and there He parted from them. The "Church of the Aescension" is built on the traditional site.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. During the first six months of last year we studied the life and words of Jesus as told in the Gospel according to John. Where were the disciples when they had their last talk with Jesus which John tells us about? What question did Jesus ask Peter three times? What did He three times tell Peter to do? What did He mean by "Feed my sheep"? All our lessons this year tell us how Peter and other apostles—especially Paul, who was not with Jesus during His earthly ministry—carried out this command of the Good Shepherd. It is an intensely interesting story.

For Older Pupils. A preview of the year's lessons, the purpose of the Book of Acts, and the keynotes in the first eleven verses. See pages 15-17 of this book.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I It is not for you to know Times or Seasons

What may not be Known. In *In Memoriam,* Tennyson represents Lazarus as being asked, after he was raised from the dead, "Where wert thou, brother, those four days?" What a natural question this! But "There lives no record of reply", the poet tells us. It is one of the things which God has not revealed. We wish we could know where Jesus had been during those days in the tomb, where during all those forty days after His resurrection—only a few appearances are recorded—but there is no answer to all these questions.

After the resurrection the disciples asked Jesus if He would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel, for they still retained their old Jewish conception of the "Kingdom of God" as a glorious empire of Israel. Times and seasons were in the Father's keeping, Jesus told them, but the power to forward the King's work was to be given them "not many days hence."

After the ascension, as the disciples stood gazing upward, they received this message: "This Jesus who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." In regard to the time of the Messianic coming Jesus had told His disciples that "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13.32). When later the Thessalonian disciples lived as though the day of judgment were close at hand, Paul wrote his second Epistle to them, telling them that the day was necessarily far distant, because great transactions must take place previous to its appearing.

What may be Known. In his first Epistle to the Thessalonians Paul writes: "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. But you are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. For God appointed us unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."

On the Sahara desert an aged sheik and an Englishman were talking. "Tell me," said the Arab, "do you know the Neby Yesa (Prophet Jesus)?" "Yes." "Tell me, is He coming soon?" "I do not know." "Is He coming next week, next year?" "God only knows." "Then," said the sheik, "Tell me what He is like, that if He passes me in the desert, I may know His face, and welcome Him."

This should be our only care, not to know the time of His coming, but to know Him, and to welcome Him into our daily lives.

In the Fulness of Time. Great inventions and discoveries familiar to us were denied the old civilizations. Why did God so long jealously guard these secrets? Not because He was arbitrary or ungenerous, but in loving care for

His creatures. The welfare of man regulates progressive illumination. The tyranny and slavery of Egypt and Assyria were terrible enough with horses and chariots; what would they have been with steam and electricity! The Jews were in constant peril because the navy of Solomon every three years brought gold, ivory and peacocks; what would have been their state had the fleets of the world anchored in their ports, as they do in ours! The Romans were destructive enough with bows and arrows, slings and stones, swords and spears; think what they would have been with gun powder and dynamite! The Greeks were voluptuous enough with the modest resources of their age; imagine their carnivals of ruinous pleasure had they commanded the diamond mines of Kimberley, the gold-fields of Johannesburg, the luxuries of all climates! God denied the treasures which would have rendered progress impossible; He withheld them until the race had attained those higher qualities without which excessive material power is a curse.

Christ came only "in the fullness of time;" before then the Advent would have been worse than useless. Even when He came He observed a striking reticence in addressing the multitude. "And with many such parables spake He the word unto them, as they were able to hear it: and without a parable spake He not unto them; but privately to his own disciples, He expounded all things." Nay, even to the disciples He could not tell all. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you unto all the truth." *William L. Watkinson,* in *The Duty of Imperial Thinking.*

A Prayer.

O God, I pray Thee for the childlike heart
That can enjoy—all vexing thoughts apart—
The beauties Thou in heaven and earth doth show,
Nor fret myself with things I do not know. *M. D. Babcock.*

II I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

The Reason of the Ascension. Having died and arisen from the dead, because it was not possible that He should be holden of death, it was not possible that Christ should suffer death a second time. Now was it possible that He should live on among men forever, His home a Mecca for those pilgrims who could visit it, faith in Him as their Redeemer based on the fact that they had seen Him with their own eyes, instead of their attaining to the spiritual blessedness of those who have not seen and yet have believed. It was necessary that His ministry should be changed from a visible to an invisible one, from Palestine to the whole earth, for had He not said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"? And so Jesus disappeared from sight; a cloud received Him. Mysterious as was His birth, wondrous as was His life, even so marvelous was His ascension.

Co-Workers with Christ. After His ascension the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God, Luke tells us in his Gospel. Dr. Denney has said that "no Apostle ever remembered Jesus," meaning that none ever thought of Him as belonging to the past, but always as present with them. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," He had promised them, and they believed His promises. The rulers of Israel had expected that the crucifixion of Jesus would put an end to His sway over the hearts of men, but they counted not on the power of His resurrection. Consternation and despair had fallen on the little group of followers when their Master was laid in the tomb, but courage and confidence were quickly restored when He arose from the dead and appeared to them at intervals during forty days. Jesus was exalted to "the right hand of God, and became head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1.20-23), and His disciples carried out His commission to preach the gospel to all mankind, never once doubting that Jesus was with them. The Spirit through whom Jesus worked was their constant Guide and Comforter.

Such a trust in the promises of Jesus Christ may be everyone's. David Livingstone said that he was never alone in Africa. "Christ said that he would

be with me always," said this great missionary; "It is the word of a gentleman of the strictest honor, and there's an end of it."

How Christ may be buried. Hide a rock down deep in the earth, and it will remain there unmoved and unmoving for millenniums. But hide a grain of corn in the warm earth when spring returns, and look for it again when autumn comes. Lo, it has risen from the tomb, and reappeared a thousandfold on the golden ear. There is one place where you can bury Christ: bury Him in your heart, and He will spring to life within you and raise you into a life that shall never end. *J. P. D. John.*

How the Vision of Christ is hidden. Jesus was taken up out of His disciples' sight, but the disciples were not left below out of His sympathy.

When Tyndall was staying in Switzerland he wrote: "I live in the immediate presence of a mountain, noble alike in form and mass. But a bucket or two of water whipped into a cloud can obscure that lordly peak. You would almost say that no peak could be there." We live in the immediate presence of Christ, but we make for ourselves the cloud which hides Him from our sight. Our interests and ambitions, our own selves, loom so large that they obscure the vision we might have of Christ. We miss His strengthening and guiding and inspiring power in our lives only because we trust in our own weakness instead of laying hold of His might.

To savages a sun-dial was given. They thought it very wonderful, and they meant to take good care of it, so they built a roof over it! The sun could not reach the dial and it was useless. There is no roof of sky between Christ and His people, yet some build a roof between Him and them in their thoughts, and do not let His light shine on them and direct their lives.

Christ is always with us, He said. We may feel His presence as we do that of a good and wise friend who lives in the same house with us. We are not always looking at such a friend, we are not always thinking about him, but we know that we can go to him for help and counsel when we need them, and we seek to live so that he may not be ashamed of anything we do. The evidence of Christ's presence with us is seen in our lives. As Whittier tells us—

> In works we do, in prayers we pray,
> Life of our life, He lives to-day.

The Influence of the Thought of the Present Christ. I have been in Alpine villages, where, at the end of every squalid alley, there towered up a great, pure, silent, white peak. That is what our lives may be; however noisome, crowded, petty, the little lanes in which we live, the Alps are at the end of them if we only choose to lift our eyes and look. It is possible that not only "into the sessions of sweet, silent thought," but into the rush and bustle of the workshop or the exchange, there may come, "like some sweet beguiling melody, so sweet we know not we are listening to it," the thought that changes pettiness into greatness, that makes all things go smoothly and easily, that is a test and a charm to discover and to destroy temptation, the thought of a present Christ, the Lover of my soul, and the Helper of my life. *G. Campbell Morgan.*

III Missionary Topic Ye shall be my Witnesses

The Largest Instance of Faith in the World. These men, who for a few months had walked with Him and learned of Him—by these His word and and work were to be preserved and extended till every man should hear of Him. They knew Him, and they were ready to do anything at His bidding. He knew them and He trusted all to them. I think this is the largest instance of faith in the history of the world. If they failed Him, His cause was at an end. The cross would be the headstone at its grave. He knew they would not fail Him, for His love held their hearts. I think of Nelson's signal as the battle of Trafalgar was to begin—"England confides that every man will do his duty." "I have no signal for confides," the officer said. "May I not say expects?" Nelson consented, but his own word was the better, with more heart in it, "England confides." The words express as well as words can, fittingly, beautifully, the thought of Christ when His hour had come. He confided that every man would do his duty. Every man did. It is a testimony to them, but even more

to Him. It was well written by one who joined them, "The greatest is love." *Alexander McKenzie,* in *The Divine Force in the Life of the World.*

Home and Foreign Missions. Ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, said Jesus to His disciples, and also unto the uttermost part of the earth. One often hears foreign missionary work decried on the ground that home missionary work is so much needed. This argument Bishop Phillips Brooks scathingly rebuked in these words: "'There are heathen here in Boston,' you declare; 'heathen enough here in America. Let us convert them first, before we go to China.' That plea we all know, and I think it sounds more cheap and more shameful every year. What can be more shameful than to make the imperfection of our Christianity at home an excuse for not doing our work abroad? It is as shameless as it is shameful. It pleads for exemption and indulgence on the ground of its own neglect and sin. It is like a murderer of his father asking the judge to have pity on his orphanhood."

The Great Commission. I have long since ceased to pray, Lord Jesus, have compassion on a lost world. I remember the day and the hour when I seemed to hear my Lord rebuking me for making that kind of prayer. I seemed to hear Him say to me, "I have had compassion on a lost world, and now it is for you to have compassion. I have given my heart; give your heart." *A. J. Gordon.*

How the Evangelization of the World is to be Accomplished. "During my early years in India, I spent several months in a village where we gained only thirteen converts," remarked Bishop J. M. Thoburn. "I returned there two years later and found eight hundred converts. No missionary had been in that village since I left. Who did the work of evangelization? Every Christian became a witness for Christ. This is the way the world was won in the first century, it is the way the world is to be won to-day."

Eight hundred native Christians in Canton, China, promised they would each, if possible, bring at least one other friend to Christ during the year.

From the native church at Makodweni in Portugese East Africa several native Christian workers have gone to other fields, but the people are not neglecting their own neighborhood. Every Sunday men, women and children visit the kraals near Makodweni and tell the good news. Tizore Navess, who has the work in charge, reports that in one month over five thousand people were reached in this way. "Therefore we take courage over our estate," he says, "and rejoice with exceeding joy over the work of the Lord our God."

Half a century ago seven shoemakers in Hamburg resolved to do what they could toward sending the Gospel to those in need of the message. In five years through their efforts fifty self-supporting churches, with ten thousand converts, were established, and four hundred thousand Bibles were distributed.

All these examples show what can be accomplished by Christians who are thoroughly in earnest. A British naval officer affirms that all the failures in great naval battles have been due, not to untoward circumstances, but to feebleness of purpose. It is to this cause that all the failures in missionary progress can ultimately be attributed.

The Ultimate Object of Witness Bearing. The divine purpose contemplates the evangelization of all peoples in pagan lands and the complete Christianization of the races. Draw the line clearly for a few moments between evangelization and Christianization. As soon as every man, woman and child on earth hears the Gospel, learns the good news, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life," the human race has been evangelized. When every human being accepts Christ as Saviour and Lord and when the inner spirit and the outward conduct of each are transformed by Christ, then the Christianization of the race will be accomplished. *J. W. Bashford,* in *God's Missionary Plan for the World.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Loyalty to Christ means carrying forward in our century the work He began in His. *C. H. Parkhurst.*

If Christianity was born into the world with the birth of its Founder, it only became the possession of the world when the life of that Founder, with-

drawn from outward sight, became a spiritual Power within it. *George Matheson.*

Resurrection touches the future; ascension touches our present spiritual life. *C. Alexander Terhune.*

Live Jesus, and when advisable preach Jesus. *Alexander Maclaren.*

We cannot believe in Christ for ourselves, without believing in Him for the world. *Phillips Brooks.*

To you the Master shall be nigh,
For you He has been raised on high. *Goethe.*

We who through some Christian have learned of Christ, must so live that another can learn Christ through us. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

The Lord is risen indeed,
He is here for your love, for your need—
Not in the grave, nor the sky,
But here where men live and die.
Richard Watson Gilder.

All men need Christ; we have Christ; we owe Christ to all men; to know our duty and to do it not is sin. *John R. Mott.*

What to thee is shadow, to Him is day,
And the end He knoweth;
And not on a blind and aimless way,
The spirit goeth. *Whittier.*

I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God. John 20.17.

He ever liveth to make intercession. Heb. 7.25.

In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. John 14.2.

I will not leave you desolate; I come unto you. John 14.18.

If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Col. 3.1.

Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. John 15.14.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

To the apostles "the kingdom" meant a Jewish realm; to Christ it meant the never-ending rule of God. We are in danger of coming as far short of the mark as did the apostles in our understanding of Christ's words.

Once a year, the Jewish High Priest passed through the veil and entered the Holy of Holies, there to make atonement for the sins of the people. Our Great High Priest has passed through the starry veil of heaven, and sits on the right hand of God, there to make constant intercession for us.

Though Jesus has ascended to the Father, we may live in personal friendship with Him as real as that enjoyed by the disciples here on earth. Have we so firmly grasped this great truth that it influences our lives?

Would you share in the glory of the ascended life? Then you must here on earth be "raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness."

The apostles were gently rebuked for standing and gazing idly up to heaven. They had received the Lord's command to be His witnesses, and their immediate duty was to return to Jerusalem as He had ordered, there to await the fulfilment of His promise of power to carry out that command. No follower of Christ may linger forever in passive contemplation. No life of monk or nun was ever the carrying out of Christ's will. There is work for all to do. Christ's command rings out clear and distinct to all, "Go ye."

I may not bear witness to Christ in Africa or India or China, but I may give what money I can and thus help others to bear witness to Him there.

I may not witness to Christ in distant lands, but I may witness to Him in my own home.

"The granary must be filled before the poor are fed; knowledge must be gained before knowledge is given," is a wise reflection of the Greek philosopher Plato. Unless I know Christ I can not be His witness anywhere.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Luke, the writer of Acts, begins his second work with a reference to his Gospel, in which, he says, he has told all that Jesus began both to do and teach while on earth. He thus leaves us rightly to infer that in the Acts he gives a narrative of what Jesus continued to do and teach through His apostles. At intervals during the forty days after His resurrection Jesus had shown Himself alive to the apostles, and had spoken about the kingdom of God. When they were assembled with Him for the last time, He bade them not leave Jerusalem till the promise which the Father had already made to them through Him had been fulfilled, for within a few days they were to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The apostles regarded this promise of the outpouring of the Spirit as implying that now at last Jesus was going to establish His kingdom on earth, the kingdom of which they had so long dreamed, whose capital was to be at Jerusalem, whose members were to be the Jews and Gentile proselytes, whose influential men were to be themselves, and whose King was to be Jesus. How hard it was for them to give up this preconceived notion of "the kingdom"! When they asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus gently rebuked them, not for their error, but for their curiosity. "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father alone knows," He told them, "but after the promised coming of the Holy Spirit you will receive power to be my witnesses, first in Jerusalem, then in all Judea and Samaria, and at last to the farthest regions of the earth."

While they were listening and looking, a strange thing happened. Jesus disappeared from their sight. A cloud—the symbol of divine presence, it almost seems, such as guided the Israelites in former times—received Him. Still they stood gazing upward, spellbound, till two men in white apparel recalled them to themselves, assuring them that Jesus should return even as they had seen Him depart.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The lasting power of early conceptions, as illustrated in the apostles' question.

2. The proof of the resurrection.

3. The expediency of Christ's departure. See "Through Man to God" by Dr. George A. Gordon, page 299.

4. The modern problem. "The whole duty of the church is to preach the whole Gospel to the whole world," is the Motto of the Laymen's Missionary Movement. See "Our First Business," by Dr. A. J. Gordon, in the *Missionary Review* for April, 1907, or "The Great Commission: does it merit the name?" by J. H. Strong in the *Biblical World* for May, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. When had the gift of the Holy Spirit been promised the disciples? (Luke 24.49; John 15.26; 16.7; Acts 1.5.) 2. What were they doing while waiting for the promised blessing? (Acts 1.14.) 3. What prophecy of the anointing with the Spirit did Jesus say had been fulfilled in Him? (Luke 4.17, 21.) 4. What effect did Jesus say the coming of the Spirit would have on the disciples? (Acts 1.8.) How many persons received the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost? (Acts 1.15; 2.1.) 6. Besides the apostles, who are especially mentioned? (Acts 1.13, 14.) 7. What was the temporary effect at the Spirit's coming? (Acts 2.4.) 8. What was the effect on the spectators? (Acts 2.7, 8, 12, 13.) 9. What was the emblem of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism? (Luke 3.21, 22.) 10. Under what other emblems is He represented? (See the Subject-Index of your Bibles, under *God, the Holy Ghost, Emblems of.*) 11. On what occasions was fire a symbol to the Israelites of God's presence? (See Subject-Index of the Bible, under *Fire, God Appears in.*) 12. What objects were accomplished by the "speaking with tongues"? Was the gift permanent or transient? 13. What is the fruit of the Spirit as given in Gal. 5.22 and Eph. 5.9? 14. How was Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) observed? (Lev. 23.15-21; Deut. 16.9-12.)

LESSON II—JANUARY 10

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read Acts 2.1-21. Commit verses 2-4.

Golden Text

I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth. John 14.16, 17.

LESSON TEXT Acts 2.1-11

1 And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilæans? 8 And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, 10 in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED.

1. *They were all together.* "They waited. It was like a ship with her sails set, watching for the breeze" (*Maclaren*).

2. *And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind.* Compare 1 Kings 19.11-13. Luke represents the sound as miraculous in its nature; it was not wind, but wind is the only thing to which he can compare it.

3. *Tongues parted asunder.* In the 29th Psalm, "The Voice of Jehovah in the storm," the lightning is described in these words, "The voice of Jehovah cleaveth the flames of fire."—*Like as of fire.* It was not fire, but could only be compared to fire.

4. *As the Spirit gave them utterance.* Their words were inspired by the Spirit, and were of a different nature from their customary words. It is a disputed question whether they spoke in foreign languages which they had not before known, or whether their utterances were enthusiastic and ecstatic, the "gift of tongues" such as is described in the 14th chapter of First Corinthians. Verses 5-11 seem to prove that Luke believed they were enabled to speak in languages other than Greek or Aramaic. Verse 13 seems to show that some who heard them did not consider their speech intelligible. If they did speak each in a different language from his own, it was not a permanent gift, for though we hear occasionally again of the "speaking with tongues," we have no instance of the use of a foreign language. The phenomenon at the baptism of Cornelius was the same (Acts 10.44-49) as here at Pentecost, but there was neither need nor hint of "other tongues" in the sense of foreign languages. It is implied that Paul, who "spake with tongues more than all," did not understand the Lycaonian speech (Acts 14.11). On the other hand, if we understand that the words spoken at Pentecost were raphsodical words of praise to God, we must admit because of verses 8-11 that some of the words,

at least, were foreign words. Dean Stanley suggests that Hellenistic Greek, compounded as it was of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, was almost in itself a speaking in "divers kinds of tongues." A sensible remark of Chrysostom's in regard to the "Gift of Tongues" as spoken of in First Corinthians, is pertinent here: "The whole passage is obscure, but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to, being such as used to occur, but now no longer take place."

5. *Dwelling.* Some of them were permanent dwellers, others only visitors to the festival.—*Every nation under heaven.* An exaggerated expression showing the wide dispersion of the Jews.

6. *Confounded.* Amazed.

7. *Galileans.* The eleven apostles were Galileans, but it is not likely that the hundred and twenty disciples (Acts 1.15) were all from the province of Galilee. Probably the word is used in the sense of provincial, untravelled, and unacquainted with the countries whence the speakers came.

8. *Language.* Latin was spoken in Italy, Aramaic in Palestine, and the various districts mentioned had their own special speech or dialect, but Greek was the universal language of the Roman Empire.

10. *Sojourners.* Many Jews were carried as slaves to Rome by Pompey the Great in 63 B. C. Their descendants became freedmen, *Libertini,* and they had their own synagogues in Jerusalem.—*Proselytes.* Gentile converts to the Jewish faith.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS.

2. *And suddenly there came from heaven.* We read the story of the miracle, and perhaps we can not understand it. It seems natural enough that when Jesus is born the sky should open and the angels sing, that when Jesus dies the skies should darken and rocks should break. The great events were worthy of those miracles. But here at Pentecost what was there to call out such prodigies? Was there not certainly enough? It was the coming back of God into man. It was the promise in these typical men of how near God would be to every man henceforth. It was the manifestation of the God Inspirer as distinct from and yet one with the God Creator and the God Redeemer. It was the blossom-day of humanity, full of the promise of unmeasured fruit. *Phillips Brooks,* in *The Candle of the Lord and Other Sermons.*

3. *It sat upon each one of them.*

All souls that struggle and aspire,
All hearts of prayer by Thee are lit,
And dim or clear, Thy tongues of fire
On dusky tribes and twilight countries sit. *Whittier.*

4. *They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.* This is the real inward miracle, the main fact, the central idea of the Pentecostal narrative. To the apostles it was their baptism, confirmation, and ordination, all in one, for they received no other. To them it was the great inspiration which enabled them hereafter to be authoritative teachers of the gospel by tongue and pen. *Phillip Schaff,* in *History of the Christian Church.*

4. *They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.* By that word *all* you must not understand the apostles only. The word *all* includes the apostles, the disciples, the followers of Christ of every name and degree. This suggestion is of the utmost practical importance: we are not to sit aside and say we have no part or lot in this bestowment of the Holy Spirit. *Joseph Parker,* in *Apostolic Life.*

11. *We hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God.* If Raphael could enter into you as you stand before his picture, would you not see deeper than you do now? Would not the Raphael in the picture come out from depths which you have never fathomed? If a child can be filled with the father's spirit, will not the spirit of the household, the intention, the purpose of it all, come out from the hard skeleton of its structure to meet the new spiritual apprehension? And so if you can be filled with God, will not the soul of God's truth of every sort, as you stand face to face with it, open to you deeper and deeper depths, changing your belief into a more and more profound and spiritual thing? *Phillips Brooks,* in *The Candle of the Lord and Other Sermons.*

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LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *The day of Pentecost.* Jewish tradition says that as early as the time of the apostles the night before Pentecost was spent in thanking God for the law, which the Jews claim was given from Sinai on the day of Pentecost. Orthodox Jews now spend the night before Pentecost in reading certain definite portions of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Talmud. The reason for this watching all night is thus stated; when God was about to reveal the law to Israel, He had to wake them up from their sleep. Hence, to remove the sin of that sleep, the Jews are now to keep awake all night.

3. *Tongues.* The Hebrews gave the name of *tongue* to most things which terminate in a blunt point. So a bay is termed in Josh. 15.2, and in verse 5 of the same chapter, what appears to have been a promontory is called a tongue of the sea. *Adam Clarke.*

3. *Like as of fire.* That unusual appearances of fire were considered emblems of the presence and influence of God, both the Scriptures and the Jewish writings amply prove. Thus God manifested Himself to Moses, when He appointed him to deliver Israel, Ex. 3.2, 3, and thus He manifested Himself when He delivered the law on Mount Sinai, Ex. 19.16-20. The Jews, in order to support the pretenses of their rabbis as delivering their instructions by divine authority and influence, represent them as being surrounded by fire while they were delivering their lectures; and that their words, in consequence, penetrated and exhilarated the souls of their disciples. Some of the Mohammedans represent divine inspiration in the same way. Nor was this notion of the manner in which divine intimations were given, peculiar to the Jews and Arabs; it exists in all countries; and the glories which appear round the heads of Chinese, Hindu, and Christian saints were simply intended to signify that they had especial intercourse with God, and that His Spirit, under the emblem of fire, sat upon them and became resident in them. The Greeks and Romans had similar notions of the way in which divine communications were given. Everything of this kind was probably borrowed from the account given by Moses of the appearance on Mount Sinai, for traditions of this event were carried through almost every part of the habitable world. *Adam Clarke* in *Commentary on the New Testament.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high;" these are Jesus' last words to His disciples recorded by Luke in his Gospel (24.49). After He was parted from them, they obediently returned to Jerusalem and "with great joy" waited for the promised blessing. For carrying out their great commission they were naturally but poorly equipped; to begin to win the world for Christ at this time required more than human power. They were to herald great mysteries; they were to convince others that Jesus was the Son of God, that He was sent from heaven to take upon Himself human nature, that He lived and taught as they alone could fully testify, that He willingly suffered death on the cross for the salvation of the world, and that He had arisen from the dead and ascended into heaven. Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection was a theme at which the world would stumble. Only through power given them from on high could these human instruments accomplish their divinely given task.

Ten days they waited, confident that the promise would be kept. Besides the eleven apostles, there were met together the mother of Jesus and other women, His brethren, and others to the number of one hundred and twenty in all. Meanwhile Peter counselled that one of their number who had "companied with them" during all their life with their Lord, and who could be a witness with them of His resurrection, be chosen to take the place of Judas Iscariot. Two names were put forward, and prayerfully and reverently lots were cast according to the Old Testament plan. The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was regarded as the divinely chosen apostle.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After Jesus was parted from them on the Mount of Olives, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and remained the ten days between the Ascension and

Pentecost. Soon after dawn on the day of Pentecost they probably went to the temple for the sacrifices and the offering of the first fruits, and then assembled in the "Upper Room" of the house which was their headquarters. The traditional room shown to-day is on Mount Zion. It is reached by an outside stairway, and is large enough to hold the "multitude" mentioned in Acts 1.15. Its roof is supported by seven pillars. When the crowd arrived (verse 6), they probably assembled in the courtyard of the house.

The regions mentioned in verses 9-11 were the abode of Jews of the *Dispersion,* those dwelling outside of the Holy Land. Only a small proportion of the Jews lived in Palestine during the age of the apostles. Josephus represents Agrippa as saying that "There is no nation on earth that has not Jews dwelling among them."

The location of each of the nations mentioned may be learned from the diagram. Parthia, Media, and Elam were countries east of the Roman Empire; Mesopotamia was debatable ground between the Parthian and Roman Empires. The Parthian Empire extended from the Tigris to India, and was a formidable rival of the Roman Empire. Media was included in the Parthian Empire. Elam lay between Media and the Persian Gulf. Mesopotamia was the country between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Judea means Palestine. The omission of Syria from the list is remarkable, but the writer is giving a list of nations speaking different languages, and the language of Syria was the same as that of Judea.

Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia were all in the peninsula now known as Asia Minor. The term Asia as used in the New Testament always refers to the Roman province by that name which extended inward from the western shore of Asia Minor.

Egypt and Libya are in Northern Africa. It was for the Jews living in Alexandria, Egypt, that the Greek version of the Old Testament called the Septuagint was made. Cyrene on the coast was the capital of Libya, the modern Tripoli. Crete is an island in the Mediterranean; Arabia, the country east and south of Palestine.

THE APPROACH OF THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. During a great battle the Duke of Wellington ordered a young officer to capture a battery that crowned a neighboring hill. The officer looked up to that hill top. He knew well that he was ordered to accomplish a great feat, a seeming impossibility. And then he turned to his commander and said, "I can go, sir, if you will give me one grasp of your all-

conquering hand." The grasp was given, and the officer hastened to the capture. In our last lesson we heard the words of the Great Commander ordering His followers to capture the world for Him. It was a seemingly impossible task. Christ knew the difficulties, and with the command He gave a promise of help. They were not to go to their task unaided, unencouraged, uninspired, but were to receive power from on high. To-day we see how that promise was kept.

For Older Pupils. Three weeks ago we celebrated the birthday of Christ; to-day we study about the birthday of Christ's Church. Last Sunday's lesson was the Promise of Power; to-day's the Promise of Power Fulfilled on Pentecost, the Jewish Thanksgiving Day. The Jews celebrated at Jerusalem the three great national festivals of the Passover, of Pentecost, and of Tabernacles.

Pentecost means in Greek fiftieth. On the second day of the Passover festival the first ripe sheaf of barley, marking the beginning of harvest, was offered, and fifty days later, the day of Pentecost, two loaves, the first fruits of the new wheat, were offered, marking the close of the harvest. In the Old Testament it is called the Feast of Weeks (Deut. 16.8, 10) because a week of weeks (7 weeks, 49 days) come between it and the first day of the Passover; the Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23.16), because it was a feast of thanksgiving for the harvest (Deut. 26.5-10); and the Day of the First-fruits (Lev. 23.17-21) because of the offering made. It was a time of rejoicing, and a day on which to recall the deliverance from bondage in Egypt (Deut. 16.11, 12). The day is now known as Whitsunday.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Prayer is Power

Prayer and Pentecost. For ten days after the ascension the disciples had "all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer." Power from on high had been promised them, but had they merely looked forward to that blessing with hopefulness, thinking of it occasionally but never praying for it, the blessing had not been theirs at Pentecost. They were prepared to receive it because they were praying for it.

Pentecost never comes without prayer. God's laws are unvariable. Through all the ages like causes have produced like effects in the spiritual as well as in the physical realm. The continuing steadfastly in prayer must precede the being filled with the Spirit.

In 1871, Dwight L. Moody was in New York asking help for the sufferers from the Chicago fire. His heart was not in his work, however, for he was consumed with a great longing. He was dissatisfied with himself, with his own ability and capacity for work, and he felt that he could not live unless he received power for greater service. "I was crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit," he has told us. "Well, one day in the city of New York—Oh, what a day! I can not describe it—I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name. I can only say God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went to preaching again. I did not present any new truths, yet hundreds were converted." Ever after this Mr. Moody's Pentecostal fire was continuously instrumental in bringing others to Christ in Pentecostal numbers. He says of himself in one of his sermons: "I was passing a machine shop the other day where this sign had been put out, 'To rent, with or without power,' and I remembered when I was a Christian worker 'without power,' and how hard the work went! But when I received the Holy Spirit and was a Christian 'with power' then there were results. I no longer carried the work; it carried me." At another time he said: "Talk about the power of Cæsar, Napoleon, Alexander, and other great generals and warriors of the earth, why it is nothing compared to the power of a man in communion with God."

Prayer the Key to God's Power. The marvelous achievements of the early Christian Church were made possible only because with the key of prayer they unlocked the storehouse of God's power. The apostles appointed deacons to help in the work, not only that the work itself could be forwarded, but also that

they, the leaders of the Church, could give themselves more unceasingly to prayer. When the time came to send forth laborers to other fields they were all assembled together with one accord in prayer. Every undertaking was begun only after prayer, and was carried through only by the aid of prayer.

Why are not Christian churches of to-day accomplishing more? Miss Havergal said it is because the Christian members are not spending the first hour of the day alone with God.

When Ole Bull neglected his violin for one day he could see a difference in his playing; when he ceased practising for two days, his friends saw the difference, and a week's neglect was apparent to everyone who heard him. So it is with out prayer life. A brief neglect on our part to commune with God makes a difference in our spiritual life and power appreciated, perhaps, only by ourselves; a longer neglect makes it known to our friends, and continued neglect proclaims it to all.

Prayer is power, for prayer brings to our aid God's power. How the spiritual force of prayer can reach up to God and move Him, we can not understand, any more than we can understand how the spiritual force of the will can reach down to the hand and move it. We do know that the hand moves and back of it is our will, and that God's power acts, and back of it is our prayer.

What Good does it do to pray. It is an old question, but it may be well to answer it again. We might question in return, "What good does it do to breathe?" The answer is, our bodies would be dead if we did not breathe. And so the answer to the first question is, our spiritual natures would be dead if we did not pray; so that it is good for us to pray because it means life to the best part of our being.

We must correct again the old idea of prayer. It is not asking God for something—that is only a part of prayer. But it is communion, companionship, fellowship with God.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,

sings Montgomery, and truly. Jesus tells us to pray because He would have us live. And to assure us of the reality of this life He tells us that our desires will be gratified. "Seek and ye shall find." God gives us all that we ask for, and in the best way. He does not give us a little thing when He wishes to give us a big thing; He does not measure the answer by the size of the request. But He goes down beneath the request and finds the real need, of which we, perchance, are scarcely conscious, and He answers that need.

There are three great results which invariably follow prayer. First, God hears and answers. Second, we are drawn nearer to Him and made a part of His great working. Third, there comes a peace to the heart and life, because we feel the sureness of God's love and power. True prayer always brings these results. *Floyd W. Tomkins,* in *Beacons on Life's Voyage.*

II Filled with the Spirit

The Experience of the Apostles. Before the great day of Pentecost the apostles had received enough of the "gift of the Spirit" to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. "'To believe in Christ,' 'to be in Christ,' 'the life of Christ in us,' and 'to receive the Spirit,' are synonymous, or at least religiously equivalent, expressions," Auguste Sebatier tells us. "A Christian is a man who, having believed the gospel, has by that act received unto himself the Spirit of Christ as a life principle, the permanent inspiration of his thoughts and acts. Paul calls Christians πνευματικοί, properly speaking, 'the inspired.' They are moved and guided by the Spirit of God."

At His first meeting with the disciples after His resurrection, Jesus said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit (John 20.22). We think of them as having now a greater measure of the gift, a greater insight into mysteries than had been theirs while Jesus was living with them. But when Jesus gave them His great commission to become His witnesses throughout the world, He promised that they should be "baptized in the Holy Spirit." There came upon them at Pentecost a flood of new power. "New and wondrous insights into the meaning of Christ's mission came flocking in upon them like winged messengers from Heaven," says Dr. G. A. Gordon, "new appreciations of all that they had

seen their Master do, of all that they had heard Him speak, of all that they had seen Him endure. And in closest union with their new and wondrous insight was intense and holy passion. The heavenly vision came to them, and the power to follow it thrilled their whole existence. The upper room was to them the sign of a new and permanent inspiration, an inspiration that gradually changed all their thoughts, that slowly changed all their feelings, that ultimately controlled their whole being and hope."

The apostles were "filled with the Spirit" at Pentecost, but they did not suddenly become perfect men; they aspired to a life of elevated purpose and action, and they were conscious of the presence and guidance of the Spirit, and ultimately this inspiration controlled their whole being. Professor Henry Drummond has said that probably most of the difficulties of trying to live the Christian life arise from attempting to half live it. He who tries to wholly live the Christian life is "filled with the Spirit."

A Great Mystery. How mysterious the whole problem is! The Holy Spirit is in us, working in us to do God's good pleasure; but yet how much of our life is due to Him, and how much is really ours? These motives by which we are moved; how many of them come from Heaven and how many of them come from the earth? These impulses that drive us in a certain direction, how many of them are the creation of the Spirit, and how many of them are the creation of our own flesh? How can any man tell how fully God has taken possession of his life? All this is a great mystery; but it is the same sort of mystery which we face every time we think about the action of the mind upon the body. How does the human spirit act upon the body? Nobody knows. And how does one mind influence another mind? We speak familiarly of influence—we influence others and are in turn influenced by them; but what is this something which we call influence? and how can one mind be molded and turned by another? If we can not answer questions like these, why should we be surprised that we can not follow the processes of God's activity when He is at work in the heart of man? If we can not explain the action of the human mind, much less may we hope to be able to explain the mind of God.

But while we move amid great mysteries, there are certain things clear as the sun at noon. The Christian religion makes the declaration positive and unmistakable that there is such a person as the Holy Spirit. He is as real and as personal and as mighty as Christ is, as God the Father is. *Charles Edward Jefferson,* in *Things Fundamental.*

Pentecostal Power. "Whenever, in all the ages," says Dr. Gordon, "any little company has sprung up, so surrendered to the Spirit and so filled with His presence as to furnish the pliant instruments of His will, a new Pentecost has dawned on Christendom; and, following a fresh tarrying in Jerusalem, has come a fresh endowment of power and a fresh preaching of the gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

"Why has your church lost the enthusiasm for souls that characterized it in the early centuries, when its members were everywhere active in telling men of Christ?" Mr. L. D. Wishard asked an Armenian priest in Turkey. "We are not an educated people," was the reply. "What evidence have we that the early witnesses who were so successful were educated men?" again asked Mr. Wishard. "We have no railroad facilities such as you have in America, and so are handicapped in our work," the priest returned, shifting his ground. "What railroads did they have in the first century?" persisted Mr. Wishard. "Ah, brother, those men had a relation with God and the Holy Spirit which we do not have," then replied the priest.

How to be filled with the Spirit. One of the bank buildings in Albany, New York, has been erected by using unclaimed deposits; there is enough of an unclaimed spiritual deposit for every Christian to make him rich for time and eternity. Let us keep appropriating that which is ours. Since the day of Pentecost we have been living in a stream of spiritual power, and all that is required, if we should be filled to overflowing, is that we should dip up and drink of that river which flows from the throne of God. There is no more electricity in the world to-day than a thousand years ago. The difference is that we of to-day appropriate that which has all the time been round about us. There is no more electricity in America than in Africa. The difference is that

we have taken hold of it and made it light our streets and carry us to and from our homes, while in the heart of Africa they sit in darkness and plod wearily over mountain and valley. It is a principle of science that if one would command a force he must obey the law of it. It is a principle in our Christian religion that if one would command all the power of God he needs simply to obey the laws of God.

If we are to be filled with the Spirit of God, the definite experience, there are certain initial conditions.

First, there must be emptiness. If either self or sin should be in the way, God's Spirit can not assume control. A friend who uses the phonograph in his dictation spent a good part of one morning dictating an important message into the instrument, but when the operator attempted to transcribe his thought, there was nothing but a confused jumble of sounds, for the film already contained a message which had not been shaved off. This is the condition of many a heart, and the filling has never come because something stands in the way.

The second part of the initial condition is absolute surrender. One must be perfectly abandoned to Christ if He is to reign in power in his life, Christ must be supreme in everything. Indeed, if one would put before him all the conditions which must be met for the infilling, the sum of them all would be surrender.

The third step is an acceptance by faith of all that God has offered to His children in Christ. One must be brought to the conviction that there is such a blessing, that God meant it for him, that he has not yet received it (if that be true) and then by faith claim it. In the Old Testament, when the blood was sprinkled by the priests it was first upon the ear, then the hand, and finally the feet. In not a few cases men could reverse the order and put service before either communion or acceptance. But God's order is the ear first, that we may hear what He has to say; the hand second, that we may receive and appropriate that which is our own; the feet last, that having heard and received we may put into practice the principle of God. Condensed from an article by *J. Wilbur Chapman,* in *The Homiletic Review.*

III Missionary Topic Earth's Many Tongues

Speaking with Other Tongues. Those who heard the disciples at Pentecost "speak with other tongues" were amazed. They marvelled that they who had come from regions as far east as India and west as Rome, as far north as Pontus and south as Egypt, should hear the mighty works of God spoken in their various languages. Since that day the native people of Alaska and of Tierra del Fuego, of Japan and of the islands of the sea, have heard the good news, each in his own language. When the apostles began their work the gospels had not been written. Now they have been translated into between four hundred and five hundred languages and dialects.

In the Anglo-Chinese School at Singapore there are forty different languages among the native tongues of the pupils. Missionaries in India, Bishop Bashford says, are now preaching in thirty-seven different languages or dialects, and must master a hundred more in order to reach all her three hundred million people. Similar difficulties confront us in every mission field on earth.

A Difficult Language. All our words are formed by combinations of some of the twenty-six characters which make up our alphabet. The Chinese language has a new character for every word. A missionary among the Chinese needs to have a vocabulary of at least five thousand words. Can you imagine how difficult must be the task of mastering five thousand characters, many of them, of course, but slightly different from one another? Milne, Morrison's first colleague in China, said that "To learn Chinese is the work for men with bodies of brass, lungs of steel, eyes of eagles, hearts of apostles, memories of angels, and lives of Methuselahs!" It was a capital crime in Morrison's day for the Chinese to teach their language to "a foreign devil," and one of his teachers always carried poison with him, which he intended to take should his work be discovered. Yet under difficulties such as these Morrison succeeded in compiling his Chinese and English dictionary, a work of forty thousand words, which cost sixty thousand dollars to publish. What a labor of love!

"I count the difficulties of the Chinese language and Chinese customs, of political exclusion and bigoted pride, of race prejudices and dense ignorance, all as nothing before a church filled with the spirit of the Great Commission," says a modern missionary.

William Carey's Work. This great missionary translated the Bible into four languages, and superintended the translation into three others and the translation of portions of the Scriptures into thirty-six more! "The life work of William Carey is one of the most wonderful which our world has seen, not less for its difficulty, its amount, its enthusiasm, and its influence over the history of the race, than for the humility, the gentleness, the patience of the great heart that undertook and carried it forward without weariness until the close of his brilliant career."

The Gospel can be told in All Earth's Many Tongues. You can not translate other religious systems as you can this. All others need language kindred to that of their original soil. But the gospel can be put into any tongue which men speak, and will refine and purify it. Luther's Bible made the German language what it is. *Alexander Maclaren.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

I have so much to do to-day I shall not be able to get through it without much time in prayer. *Martin Luther.*

You have God's power when God has all of you. *J. F. Carson.*

The great question is, not what the Holy Spirit is, but what He does in the soul of the believing man. *A. B. Bruce.*

The history of any great revival is a record of the Spirit's coming upon assemblies of Christians, and thus giving the tongue of fire to individuals. *A. C. Dixon.*

The poverty of many professing Christians in regard to spiritual gifts is directly due to the smallness of their expectations and desires. *Alexander Maclaren.*

First the eternal Father whom no man hath seen; then the Son in whom God is revealed to men; then the Holy Spirit in whom the Son is revealed to the world; and there is one God. *Alexander McKenzie.*

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke 11.13.

Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 1 Cor. 3.16.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

The disciples spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance, but there were those present who said that they were filled with new wine. There are disciples of Christ in our day who at times seem clearly to speak under divine impulse, and there are also scoffers among their hearers.

Paul closes his second letter to the Corinthians with this great benediction: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. For us, as for those Corinthian Christians, there is no blessing more needed that "the communion of the Holy Spirit."

The power given the disciples at Pentecost was given them to be used; they were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. All spiritual power is for use in God's service.

If we live in the Spirit we will also walk in the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

God, by whose breath supernal
My fire of life doth burn!
Great God, to whose eternal
Essence I must return!

Grant me some sign or proving,
That I have grown to be,
In doing or in loving,
A soul more fit for Thee. *Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

With the ascension we pass from the visible ministry of Jesus to the invisible ministry of the Holy Spirit. It was expedient for His disciples that He went away, Jesus had told them, for His going was associated with the coming to them of the greater blessing of the Spirit. Firm in their faith, true in their fellowship, and steadfast in their prayers, the disciples awaited the fulfilment of the promise. The blessing came suddenly, as they were met together on the day of Pentecost. They heard a sound coming from heaven which was more like the rushing of a mighty wind than anything else with which it could be compared, and it filled the house where they were. The miraculous sound was supplemented by a miraculous sight. Something that could only be compared to tongues of fire they saw, which was distributed, a part resting on each one. They were filled with the Spirit, and under His guidance they began to speak with other tongues. The unwonted sound attracted a great multitude of Jews. They heard the inspired disciples speak, and in great amazement they asked, "Are not these speakers Galileans, unlearned and untraveled? How, then, is it possible that we hear them speaking in our own language? We who are from Parthia and Media and Elam, from Mesopotamia and Judea, from Cappadocia, and Pontus and Asia and Phrygia and Pamphylia, from Egypt and Libya, from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, yes, from Crete and Arabia, how is it that we hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God?" Only a miraculous power could have enabled these illiterate men thus to speak, they think, and in the effect upon the multitude we see the purpose of the gift.

To the disciples the sound as of wind betokened the receiving of power from on high, they were filled with the Spirit, whose very name means "Breath," they were in-spirited, inspired with a higher life. The sight as of fire meant the purifying, burning, transforming effect of that infilling. The symbols which were like wind and like fire disappeared after a time; the accompanying gift of "speaking with tongues" was also transient, but the Spirit's presence was abiding, by His aid they were enabled to fulfil their great commission and proclaim Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection to the uttermost parts of the earth.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Glossolaly, or the Gift of Tongues, as recorded in the New Testament. See Mark 16.17; Acts 2.1-16; 10.44-48; 11.15; 19.1-7; 1 Cor. chapters 12, 13, and 14, especially 14.2, 18, 19, 39; 1 Thess. 5.19-21. See "The Bible in Four Hundred Tongues," by W. G. Fitzgerald, in *Harper's Magazine*, Oct., 1907.

2. Our need of insight and enthusiasm. See "The Upper Room," in "Through Man to God," by George A. Gordon.

3. The modern problem. Why does not the Church to-day have greater power?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. To whom did Peter give his address? 2. How did he answer the charge that the disciples were drunk? 3. What did his answer mean? 4. Where is the quotation in verses 34 and 35 from? (Psalm 110.1.) 5. For what purpose did Jesus once quote the same words? (Matt. 22.43-45; Mark 12.34-37.) 6. What is the argument from the quotation from David? (With verse 34 compare verses 29-31.) 7. What is the great theme of his address? 8. What three kinds of proof did Peter give? 9. What kind of proof that Jesus is the Messiah would be most convincing to Jews? 10. Make an analysis of Peter's whole address. 11. In what ways does the address show great skill? 12. With this sermon compare Peter's other sermon to the Jews, Acts 3.12-26. 13. When had Jesus told His disciples that they should do greater works than He had done? (John 14.12.)

LESSON III—JANUARY 17

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Read Acts 2.22-47. Commit verses 32, 33.

Golden Text

They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and the prayers. Acts 2.42.

LESSON TEXT Acts 2.32-42

32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. 34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard *this,* they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? 38 And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. 40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. 41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

32. *This Jesus.* About whom he had been speaking, verses 22-31.—*Whereof we all are witnesses.* The apostles considered it their special duty to witness to His resurrection. Acts 1.22.

33. *By the right hand of God exalted. "The right hand of God* in the strong style of Hebrew poetry means that our Lord is now on the throne of power. It is the fulfilment of His own words as recorded at the end of Matthew's Gospel, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth'" (*Richards*). The words may also be taken as stating that the exaltation was by means of the right hand of God, that is, by the power of God.—*Poured.* Peter gives as proofs of the resurrection: (1), the witness of all the disciples (verse 32); (2) the confirmation of the Holy Spirit (He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear); and (3) the prophecy of David (verses 34 and 35).—*Now.* Omitted in Revised Version.

34. *David ascended not.* Hence the words can not refer to himself.—*The Lord...feet.* This quotation is from the 110th Psalm (verse 1), which is entitled, "Jehovah gives Dominion to the king. A Psalm of David." The King is not David himself, but the Messiah, of whom the Psalm is a prophecy. In Matt. 22.43-45 and Mark 12.35-37 Jesus quotes these words and attributes to David divine inspiration in thus speaking of the Messiah. Peter uses the words to prove that Jesus is both Christ and Lord, verse 36.—*On my right hand.* Jesus is made a partaker of the divine glory and dominion.

35. *Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.* Compare Heb. 10. 12, 13. It is an expression denoting complete victory, and originated, doubtless, from the ancient custom of conquerors putting their feet on their enemies necks.

36. *Therefore.* Because the resurrection and ascension of Jesus agree with the prophecy, He must be the Christ.—*Lord and Christ.* Master and Messiah.

37. *They.* See verse 6.—*Pricked in their heart.* "By this 'word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword,' the heart or conscience of the multitude was pierced or pricked" (*Rackham*).—*Brethren.* Peter had called them Brethren, verse 29.

38. *Repent ye.* See Christ's words in Luke 24.47.—*Be baptized.* See Jesus' words in Matt. 28.18, 19.—*In the name of Jesus Christ.* In being baptized they acknowledge that Jesus is what His name of Christ means, the Messiah or Redeemer.—*Unto the remission of sins.* The object of accepting Jesus as the Christ.—*Spirit.* See Acts 8.17; 10.47.

39. *To you is the promise.* Acts 1.4. "The promise had at first been of material blessings, *e. g.* the land of Canaan, but as these were obtained and yet the ideal was not attained, the content of the promise grew deeper and more spiritual until it became the promise of the presence of God Himself in His Spirit" (*Rackham*).—*All that are afar off.* This may refer to the Jews who were scattered abroad, and it may refer to the Gentiles, for it is an expression often used for Gentiles in both the Old and New Testaments. If the latter is meant, Peter at this time, of course, thought of the promise as being to the Gentiles only in case they became Jewish proselytes, through circumcision.

40. *Save yourselves from.* From sharing in the guilt and penalty of.—*Crooked. Untoward,* in the Authorized Version, means not toward, not docile, hence perverse. A perverse and crooked generation, Deut. 32.5.

42. *In the breaking of bread.* "This is the earliest New Testament phrase for the Lord's Supper. It is most likely that the Lord's Supper was dispensed at every evening meal" (*Lindsay*).—*The prayers.* Public worship.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

38. *Baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.* There is reason to suppose that at the very first, at Pentecost and for a little while after, the only name spoken at the baptism, either by minister or convert, was the name of Jesus Christ. We can well understand why it should be so. His personality was the one thing that had made religion real to these converts. This Jesus Christ, the Crucified, the Risen—this was their confession of faith. They were baptized therefore into His name, and the creed that sprang from their lips was, "I believe in Him." But we know that the formula was soon enlarged to what we find prescribed in the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel, and what we still use at baptism in our churches—that is, "the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." This, however, should not be taken as a new formula or creed, but only the old enlarged, the meaning coming out more clearly as men meditated on it longer. *William R. Richards, The Apostles' Creed.*

42. *They continued in the apostles' teaching.* The prominence of teaching among the Jews was due to their possession of written scriptures. The scriptures contained their law and rule of life, social and civil, as well as religious, and so their interpretation was a matter of supreme importance. Learned students of the law became rabbis or teachers, who expounded the scriptures and taught publicly; they were surrounded by classes of disciples and formed different schools of interpretation. The Christian society first appeared as such a school. The Lord was a great Teacher or Rabbi who taught with authority. He was the Master surrounded by His pupils. And when He was taken away the apostles took His place as teachers. They taught publicly, having a place of teaching in the temple, and were recognized as rabbis, although they taught in an untechnical manner. *R. B. Rackham,* in *Commentary on the Acts.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

34. *David ascended not into the heavens.* The Jews were wont to speak of a number of "heavens," or realms above the earth. According to Rabbi Abia, there were six ante-chambers, as it were, or steps, to the seventh heaven, where God Himself dwelt. There are several references in the Scriptures to "the

third heaven;" the first heaven was held to be the firmament; the second the region of the stars; the third, the throne of God.

41. *They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.* It has been pointed out that "that day," according to Biblical usage, need not necessarily mean the day of Pentecost, but may rather mean "that period," the first epoch in the life of the Church. This interpretation has been adopted by many on account of the seeming impossibility of three thousand persons being baptized in one day in Jerusalem, where water was not abundant. But there were numerous pools encircling the city, some of them still in use, and the habits of the East would not prevent these public reservoirs being used for this purpose.

42. *They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching.* It must not be forgotten that no part of the New Testament was written at this time. The apostles taught from memory the lessons of Jesus' life and words. In the second century, after the Gospels were written, these were read at the weekly services for worship of Christian churches.

43. *Breaking of bread.* The Jews' bread was baked in cakes and divided for distribution by breaking, and apparently the head of the house would begin the meal by solemnly breaking bread and giving thanks over it; and so the term *breaking of bread* came to denote this commencement of a meal with blessing. *R. B. Rackham.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A great crowd composed of native Jews of Jerusalem and of Jews from distant lands who were attending the feast of Pentecost, had collected on hearing the unusual sound from that upper room where were met the disciples. They heard the disciples speak, and in amazement they asked one another, What meaneth this? The apostles knew the meaning. They knew that the Spirit had come to Jesus at His baptism in the form, as it were, of a dove. They knew that Jesus had said the Spirit would come to them, and in the sound as of wind and the sight as of tongues of fire, and the speech of divers languages, they recognized the fulfilment of Jesus' words and a new proof to them of His Messiahship and an assurance of inspiration and guidance in the work before them.

"They are filled with new wine," said some of those present, and Peter answered that this could not be, for it was but nine o'clock in the morning. (On festival days no Jew would eat or drink before ten or even noon.) Then Peter delivered his great sermon. He was speaking to Jews, and his great object was to prove to them that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and expectations in regard to the Messiah. The miraculous events which so amazed them were but the fulfilment, he told them, of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2.28-32) that at the coming of the Messiah God's Spirit would be poured forth and old and young, men and women, bond and free, would see visions and speak God's truths.

Jesus of Nazareth had shown Himself approved of God, as they themselves knew, by the mighty works and wonders and signs wrought among them. He had been crucified and slain, and this was to the Jews a stumbling-block, for they could not believe that their Messiah should suffer such humiliation. Peter, therefore, told them that this death, wrought through the hands of His enemies, had been in accordance with God's high purpose. Death could not hold Jesus; God had raised Him from the dead to higher life and wider power. David had foretold this (Psalm 18.8-11) when he said that "Thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption." These words could not have referred to David himself, for David had died and been buried and they knew where his tomb was; David clearly foresaw the resurrection of Christ. Our lesson takes up the remainder of his sermon.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Early in the morning on the day of Pentecost the apostles and all the disciples were in "the upper room" at Jerusalem where Jesus had so often met with them. When the crowd collected about the building they doubtless descended to the courtyard below, and here, probably, Peter delivered his sermon.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. The last evening before His arrest, Jesus spent with His disciples in "the upper room" in Jerusalem. He told them that He would be with them only a little while; they were very sorrowful, and He comforted and cheered them. "Let not your heart be troubled," He said, "believe in God, believe also in me." And then He told them that it was expedient, best, for Him to go away. This was one of our lessons last year, you remember. Why did He say that it was expedient for Him to go away? "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." What other name do we give to the Comforter? When was this promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit fulfilled? Where? (Probably in the same upper room). How long after the promise was made?

Among Jesus' farewell words to His disciples another promise or prophecy also was made, that they should do greater works than He had done because He was going to the Father. This we see fulfilled in our lesson to-day. Peter speaks to a great crowd at Pentecost, and three thousand people are led by his words to become followers of Jesus Christ, a greater result than had followed Jesus' own words to the people.

For Older Pupils. When Lincoln was nominated for the presidency of the United States it was said that he was an uneducated, uncultured man, and therefore could not write presidential speeches; it was clear that some one would have to write them for him. But Lincoln wrote his own speeches, and they are rightly accounted worthy of a place among the world's best literature. His speech at Gettysburg could be neither more skilful nor more beautiful. Lincoln's heart was in his words, and, God was with him. We may truly say that his words were inspired.

Had it been said to anyone at Jerusalem in the first century who knew Peter that Peter was to be the first one to take up the work of Christ, that one would have said that Peter was an ignorant fisherman, he could not make a logical, forcible, persuasive speech, some one would have to tell him what to say. But on the morning of Pentecost he made an address so remarkable that many in these days say it could not have been reported by Luke just as Peter gave it. But Peter's heart was in his words, and he was inspired.

Dr. Stigler says of this address: "In its adroitness, in the arrangement of the arguments, in its analysis, in its steering clear of Jewish prejudices, in its appeal and effect, it is without a peer among the products of uninspired men. As an expression of persuasive argument it has no rival. The more it is studied the more its beauty and power are disclosed... Men like Luther and Wesley have won a large following after years of patient toil. But who, save the fisherman of Galilee, won it in a day? God was with him. The matter can not be explained unless we admit the outpouring presence of the Holy Spirit."

Peter began his address by a defense of the charge that the disciples were "filled with new wine" and an explanation that the phenomenon they had witnessed had been predicted by the prophet Joel. And then he took up his great theme that Jesus is the Christ. Let us see how he proved this.

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Repentance

The First Step. Cicero says that the words of Pericles left *stings* in the minds of his hearers. Luke says that when the multitude heard the words of Peter they were *pricked* in their heart. The words of the 16th and 17th verses of the 51st Psalm which bears the title "A Contrite Sinner's Prayer for Pardon," are these:

> Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:
> Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.
> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
> A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Contrite comes from the Latin word *contritus,* and means literally crushed, bruised, ground to powder. A mind that is stung, a heart that is pricked, are broken, or bruised, are expressions denoting contrition, an awakened conscience.

The Second Step. "What shall we do?" the conscience-stricken crowd asked Peter at Pentecost, and he answered, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins."

John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness saying: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." After John the Baptist was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel." Jesus was delivered up, and the apostles continued to proclaim the same message.

What does "repent" mean? Often we give too narrow a meaning to this word. We think of it as meaning solely a sorrow for sin. In Exodus 13.17 we read that when Pharaoh at last let the people leave Egypt, God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. Here repent has another of its meanings, that of changing one's mind. True repentance always includes both sorrow for sin and change of mind and therefore course of conduct. The penitent seeks forgiveness for sin, and ceases to practice sin.

When the jailor fell trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas and asked "What must I do to be saved?" their answer was "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." Perhaps this and other Scripture words come to your mind, and you wonder that Peter said nothing about faith to these people. He had said to them, "Know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." It was their acceptance of these words, their belief that Jesus was the Christ, that caused them to be "pricked in their heart." They changed their views in regard to Jesus. Before they had thought Jesus a false Christ, now they believe Him to be the true Christ, and this belief led them to ask, What shall we do? In bidding them be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of their sins, Peter bade them publicly acknowledge by this rite their faith in Jesus as the Redeemer.

Other Steps. Says an Old English Homily: "The first thesis of the famous ninety that Luther nailed to the door of the church at Wittenberg declared that 'When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, says Repent, He means that the whole life of the believers should be a constant and perpetual repentance.' It is not enough to say of a past that has been full of rebellion and selfishness, that we are sorry; the after life must unceasingly bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.

Repentance is a true turning unto God whereby men, forsaking utterly their idolatry and wickedness, do with a lively faith embrace, love, and give themselves to all manner of good works, which by God's word they know to be acceptable unto Him. Now there be four parts of repentance: contrition, confession, faith, amendment of life."

II Continuance

After Conversion, What? When repentance has led to conversion, and one has entered "through the portal of conscious deliverance," as Dean Farrar expresses it, is the goal reached? May one sit down there and rest for the remainder of his life? We speak of "becoming Christians," as though a Christian character were attained once for all: the Christian writers of the fourth century spoke of "making Christians" (χριστιανοὺς ποιεῖν) as though it was a gradual process.

The usual verb for "be converted" in the Greek New Testament is ατραφῆτε, which means literally *be turned around,* as a flower to the sun, be faced about as a ship towards its right course. One who is converted is turned in the right direction, his face is set toward the Sun of Righteousness. Robert Louis Stevenson in telling how he gave up a life of idleness for one of work and service, does not use the word "converted," but says instead, "I came about like a well-handled ship. There stood at the wheel that unknown Steersman whom we call God."

After a ship is turned in the right direction it must be kept on its course by a pilot at the wheel. It can not be turned and then left without constant guidance. After a man is turned consciously toward God he must keep him-

self under the Great Pilot's guidance. The command "Right about face" is followed by another, "March."

We are told that the three thousand who were converted on the Day of Pentecost "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." Their natures were not at once entirely transformed; they could only become gradually changed. They continued. This Pentecostal church was instructed concerning the way of salvation, and continued to grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord.

Continuance means Growth. The frontispiece of a work on ornithology has a representation of the earliest known bird preserved in the geological record, the archæopteryx, a creature which was a feather-clad bird and yet had only just passed the reptile state and had a strange, monstrous form. By its side is a picture of the highest type of bird, the bird of Paradise, a form so glorious that when a great naturalist first saw it in its native haunts, its splendor, he tells us, made his heart beat violently and he nearly fainted. "Millions of delicate differentiations have lifted the lizard-like original into an organized scrap of rainbow." "This teaching of natural history," Dr. W. L. Watkinson draws the comparison, "may remind us of the countless variations, transformations, and phases which crowd the wide interval separating the convert, freshly emerging from the mud of the slough with many gross characteristics yet adhering to him, and the saint, cleansed, disciplined, faultless—quite on the verge of heaven. We think of a man as a converted man, as a good man, and are content with the simple description; yet we must not forget that there is such a thing as comparative goodness, and that innumerable gradations exist among good men. The Scriptures repeatedly recognize these subtle differences in the character, consecration, and service of those who are, nevertheless, all recognized disciples."

Growing New Wood. In Longfellow's declining years a friend asked him how it was possible for him to keep so energetic and write with such power. Pointing to an apple tree in bloom the poet replied: "That apple tree is very old, but I never saw prettier blossoms on it than those it now bears. The tree grows a little new wood each year, and I suppose it is out of that new wood that those blossoms come. Like the apple tree, I try to grow a little new wood each year."

Our spiritual natures should "grow new wood" each year and keep on blossoming, using all diligence, in our faith supplying virtue, and in our virtue knowledge; and in our knowledge self-control, and in our self-control patience, and in our patience godliness, and in our godliness brotherly kindness, and in our brotherly kindness love.

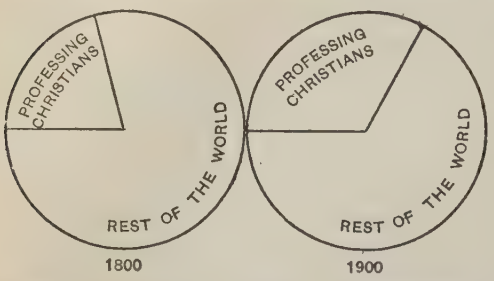
III The Missionary Topic The Extension of Missions

Knowing, Growing, Glowing, Going. Jesus began His work with a little group of followers, Peter and James and John and the rest. At His ascension in A. D. 30, the one hundred and twenty disciples who met in that upper room probably represented nearly the entire strength of Christianity. From this small beginning we can watch the growth of the Christian Church. On the day of Pentecost there were added "about three thousand souls." In the 47th verse of our lesson to-day, we are told that "the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved." After Peter's sermon following the healing of the lame man (our next Sunday's lesson), we hear that "many of them that heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to be about five thousand." In a single generation churches were established throughout the Roman Empire from Jerusalem to Rome. Had the missionary zeal of the apostolic age continued in the Church through the centuries since, long ago would the whole world have learned of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Taylor says that the needs of the Church are to know, to grow, to glow, to go. It has been held that the trouble with missionary work has been, not that there has been actual hostility to them at home, but that progress abroad has been so much more rapid than the growth of interest and zeal at home. In recent years the home interest has been wonderfully quickened. Through Home and Foreign and Young People's Missionary Societies, Bible Societies, Laymen's Missionary Movement, World's Student Christian Federa-

tion and World's Sunday-school Association, people in Christian lands are studying the situation in mission fields, and are glowing with zeal for the missionary cause. More money and thought and zeal and lives are being spent to further missionary interests than ever before in the world's history.

It is estimated that there are to-day fifteen hundred million people in the world, and that about one-third of them are Christians. Of course these five hundred million nominal Christians are not all loyal followers of Christ, but the figures show how the knowledge of Christ has been extended over the earth. The work yet to be done is enormous, but far less difficult than that already accomplished. Protestant missions are only a century old. After half a century of work there were few mission stations far from the coasts of foreign fields.



Now, according to Beach's "Geography of Protestant Missions," there are about six thousand principal mission stations and twenty-two thousand out-stations, with over sixteen thousand missionaries, and the number has been increased in the years since that book was published. In September, 1807, Robert Morrison landed in China, the first Protestant missionary there. In all that vast country there was not one native Christian; to-day there are three-quarters of a million Christian Chinese. Similar has been the work accomplished in other lands.

In a talk on missions Joseph Cook stated that these words of Longfellow exactly describe the conditions of our earth to-day:

Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light;
It is daybreak everywhere,

and then he added, "God deliver us from dawdling at daybreak!"

SENTENCE SERMONS

A new life is the best and most sublime penitence. *Martin Luther.*

We should make our notch every day in our character, as Robinson Crusoe on his stick. *Thoreau.*

Growth is better than permanence, and permanent growth is better than all. *James A. Garfield.*

Religion is a process repeated, not a process remembered. *C. M. Lamson.*

As sin is selfishness, so righteousness is fraternity. *Shailer Matthews.*

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above. *John Fawcett.*

Whoever introduces into the public affairs the principles of primitive Christianity will change the face of the world. *Benjamin Franklin.*

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Luke 15.10.

And he, (the Holy Spirit) when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. John 16.20.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Week after week you have repeated in the Apostle's Creed, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." What does this mean to you? Does it mean simply that you believe in the possibility of sins being forgiven, or does it mean that you can say, "I know that my sins are forgiven"?

In the Creed, too, you have often said, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church."

The Catholic, or Universal, Church is the united company of those who are bound to one another in Christian fellowship. What a contrast there is between the beginnings of the Christian Church, with its fellowship and concord and peace, and some Christian churches of to-day with their factions and discord and strife!

Dr. Bushnell says that some people are like flag-staffs—they *grew,* while others are like trees—they *grow.* If you stop growing in your spiritual life there is serious danger of your losing the spiritual life which you have. Have you grown spiritually as much as you should since you became a Christian?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Simon Peter, who seven weeks before Pentecost had been afraid to admit to a maidservant that he was one of Jesus' disciples, boldly stood up on the morning of Pentecost and proclaimed to a great crowd of Jews that this Jesus was the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, and charged them with the crime of having crucified Him. He explained that the present outpouring of the Holy Spirit had been predicted by the prophet Joel. Then he took up his great theme, that Jesus is the Christ, and gave three proofs. First, Jesus had wrought many wonders of which they themselves were witnesses. Second, Jesus had arisen from the dead; of this he and all the apostles were witnesses, and furthermore the resurrection and exaltation fulfilled two prophecies of the Psalms and thus proved Jesus the Messiah. Third, this coming of the Holy Spirit confirmed the truth that Jesus lived and cared for His disciples. Jesus was, in truth, both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom they had crucified.

Peter's words, especially the appeal to prophecy, were convincing to the Jews, and the home-thrust at their consciences stung their hearts. "Brethren, what shall we do?" they asked. "Repent and be baptized," Peter answered. They must not only repent of their sin, but must change their views in regard to Jesus; the One whom they had regarded as a false Christ, they must accept as the true Christ, and acknowledge this by being baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of their sins." The gift of the Holy Spirit should be theirs, for the promise was to them and their children and those afar.

Many other words Peter spoke on this occasion, urging his hearers to save themselves from sharing the guilt and fate of their perverse generation. About three thousand believed his words and were baptized. They became members of the Christian community, and they were steadfast in their attention to the teaching of the apostles, lived with wonderful unity and comradeship with the apostles and the others, and shared in the breaking of bread together and in public prayers.

SUBJECT FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

Christian unity. See chapter XII of "The New Crusade," by Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Name some of the occasions when Peter and John are mentioned as being together. (John 1.41; Mark 5.37; Matt. 17.1; Luke 22.8; 13.23, 24; 18.15, 16; 20.2-8; 21.7, 20.) 2. How old was the lame man at this time? (Acts 4.22.) 3. Look up these references to the duty of giving alms in connection with the offerings at the temple: Deut. 14.28, 29; 15.7, 11; 26.12, 13. 4. What did Jesus tell the disciples about the poor in John 12.8? 5. Instead of alms being given to beggars and afflicted people, what is now done for them? 6. Review the trial of Jesus, to which Peter refers, and note the part taken by the people. 7. On what occasion had a demoniac called Jesus "the Holy One of God?" (Mark 1.21-27.) 8. With Peter's disclaiming any power himself in working the miracle, compare Moses' bringing the water from the rock as if through his own power, Num. 20.10. 9. Had the disciples wrought miracles during Jesus' life? (Matt. 10.5-8; Luke 10.17.) 10. When they attempted once to work a miracle and failed, to what did Jesus ascribe their failure? (Mark 9.13, 28, 29.) 11. Compare the miracle of the next lesson and its effect on the people (verses 11, 12) with a similar miracle and its effect narrated in Acts 14.8-14. 12. Compare the miracle with that wrought by Jesus narrated in John 5.1-9.

LESSON IV—JANUARY 24

THE LAME MAN HEALED

Read Acts 3.1-26. Commit verses 9, 10.

Golden Text

By faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know. Acts 3.16.

LESSON TEXT Acts 3.1-16

1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*. 2 And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. 8 And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. 12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. 14 But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, 15 and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. 16 And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Peter and John.* John is mentioned in the Acts only here and in 8.14.—*The ninth hour*, 3 P. M.

2. *A certain man.* Now forty years old, Acts 4.22.—*Alms.* A gift of charity.

6. *Silver and gold.* Silver and gold coins.—*In the name.* In the authority. Compare Jesus' words, I say unto thee, arise, Mark 5.41; Luke 7.14. "The name of a person or thing sums up all that we know about him or it. So to the Jews 'the name of God' was the sum of the revelation of God, and 'the name of the Lord' became equivalent for 'the Lord.' Similarly, the name of Jesus Christ would signify all that was contained in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ" (*Rackham*).

7. *Ankle bones.* "The Greek words are those that a doctor would use in describing a patient, and make one of those minute coincidences which go to prove that Luke the physician was the author of the Acts" (*Lindsay*).

11. *Held Peter and John.* Perhaps because he was excited, as has been sug-

THE LAME MAN HEALED—PETER AND JOHN AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

gested, but more probably because, like the demoniac whom Jesus freed (Mark 5.18), he would not part from them.

12. *It.* The wonderment of the people.—*He answered.* This word is often used in the New Testament where no question has been asked, the answer being to the evident thoughts of the listeners.

13. *Servant.* Matt. 12.18.—*Hath glorified his servant Jesus.* To this expression many interpretations have been given, but it seems obviously to refer to the miracle which God had wrought through the apostles, and which, therefore, glorified Him; compare Jesus' use of the same word when He was told of Lazarus' sickness: "This sickness is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby," John 11.4.—*Whom ye delivered up.* To pilate, through their rulers. In this very porch where they were talking Jesus had marvelously escaped stoning. John 10.23, 31, 39.—*Before the face of.* Matt. 27.25.—*Had determined to release him.* Matt. 27.24; Mark 15.15; Luke 23.14, 16; John 19.4.

14. *Ye denied.* Luke 23.2; John 19.15.—*A murderer.* Barabbas, Matt. 27.16-23.

15. *And killed the Prince of life.* R. V. margin, *Author of Life.* The same Greek word is translated *author* in Hebrews 2.10, and 12,2 (R. V.) "They preferred the life-taker to the life-giver" (*Stock*). "The Captain or Prince is the ordinary meaning of the Greek word in the Old Testament, and Christ by His victory over life and death was declared to be the Prince of life" (*Rackham*).

16. *And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong.* Whether the faith was that of the lame man, who had sufficient faith to obey the command to arise and walk, or of the apostles (Matt. 17.20) can not be decided.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

10. *Sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple.* As Peter and John went up, in the ordinary practice of life's duty, to the temple at the hour of prayer, there came to them an opportunity for service. Not only to the afflicted one on whose life their healing power fell did their influence extend; indirectly it touched many others who, realizing what had taken place and astonished by it, received from the apostle's lips a message explaining the secret of their power.

The Beautiful Gate means, for us, the hour of opportunity that lies close to the hour of prayer. What do I mean by that? I mean that those who enter into this experience of prayer will find lying all along the pathway of life occasions for service and powers for service which but for their experience in prayer they would neither have seen nor have been able to use. I believe that prayer not only keeps alive in us but keeps in working power influences which do not continue unless we continue in prayer. The discontinuance of prayer means to rob life of power. *Charles Cuthbert Hall,* in *Association Monthly.*

15. *The Prince of life.* This is one of the many great titles conferred upon the Lord by those who loved Him. He was "The Prophet of the Highest"; He was "The Great High Priest;" He was "The Shepherd of the Sheep;" He was "The Captain of Salvation;" He was "The First-Born of Many Brethren;" He was "Redeemer," "Reconciler," "Saviour." Gratitude and affection shaped many a tender phrase in which to describe Him, but there is none, perhaps, more luminous or more comprehensive than this with which the impulsive Peter, facing the men who had put Him to death, gave utterance of his loyalty. Its pertinence is confirmed by the word of Jesus Himself, in one of the sayings in which He describes His mission: "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it abundantly." *Washington Gladden,* in *The Homiletic Review.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *At the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.* From Herodotus we know that the Greeks adopted from the Babylonians the division of the day into twelve hours, and it is supposed that the Jews, too, learned this method of computing time from the same people during their captivity. Hours are first mentioned in the Scriptures in the Book of Daniel. The daylight between sun-

rise and sunset was divided into twelve equal parts, and of course the length of each part, or hour, unlike ours, which are always of the same length, varied according to the season, being much longer in the summer than in the winter. We must remember that in those days there were no clocks like ours to measure time. Whether the Jews used sun-dials or water clocks or some other contrivance we do not know.

The third hour was half way between sunrise and noon, or about nine o'clock in our reckoning. The Jews had three fixed hours for daily prayers, the third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day. There is a Jewish tradition that the third hour had been consecrated by Abraham, the sixth by Isaac, and the ninth by Jacob.

3. *A certain man was laid daily at the door of the temple to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.* Palestine, like all other countries of this period, had no homes for the poor and the afflicted. Hospitals and asylums belong to modern times. Nor is there any organized system of charity in Palestine at the present day. The Koran highly extols deeds of charity, and few people pass by beggars, whether impostors or not, without giving them a copper piece worth about half a cent. The blind and the lame and the deformed of all sorts have regular places on the steps of churches and mosques where they sit all day and beg, for it is believed that those who come from the house of prayer will be most charitable.

3. *An alms.* The prophet Daniel, after interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream as meaning that he should be driven from men, to dwell with the beasts of the field, urges him to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Alms-giving came to be regarded among the Jews as a great act of piety, even an act that would help blot out sins. The Pharisees were especially ostentatious in their giving of alms (Matt. 6.2).

8. *Praising God.* This may indicate that the man was truly devout, but orientals are wont to ascribe all remarkable events, whether good or ill, directly to God.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Some months have probably passed—how many we do not know—since the events of Pentecost. The large company who on that day professed repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ have remained faithful to their habits of worship, they have lived in close and sympathetic fellowship one with another, voluntarily sharing their goods with those who had none, and continually rejoicing and praising God. Day by day their numbers increased.

Many wonders and signs were wrought by the apostles. One remarkable cure Luke now narrates, because of its far-reaching effects. The cure and Peter's sermon aroused the opposition of the authorities.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of the lesson is the temple enclosure at Jerusalem. The word *temple,* you remember, was applied to the whole enclosure with its various courts which rose terrace upon terrace—first the Court of the Gentiles, next the Court of the Women, then the Court of the Israelites, and lastly the Court of the Priests within which was the sanctuary itself. The Court of the Women (so-called because women might come thus far but no farther) was the usual place for the worshippers, and it was always thronged at the hours of prayer.

The location of the Beautiful Gate is not known. Some scholars think that it led from the city without into the first court. Because Josephus describes a gate between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women, facing the Mount of Olives, as made of Corinthian brass and far excelling in magnificence the other gates, which were covered with silver and gold, it has been thought that this was the one called the Beautiful Gate.

Solomon's Porch, where the people crowded around Peter and John and the man who had been lame, was on the eastern side of the Court of the Gentiles. This porch was called Solomon's, not because it was the very one erected by Solomon, but because it was built on the great wall which Solomon

had raised from the valley below, and retained the name of the porch which it replaced. Around the inside of the outer walls there were two rows of porches on the east, north, and west, and three or four rows on the south. They were paved with marble and their flat roofs of cedar were supported by marble colums.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In Mohammedan countries in the East there is an official called the Muezzin whose duty it is to call out the hours of prayer from the mosque. During the day and night he utters his chant from the balcony of the minaret: "Allah is most great. There is no God but Allah. Mohammed is the apostle of Allah. Come to prayer." At the sound of his voice the followers of Mohammed drop their work and engage in prayer. Two calls to prayer are chanted during the night, and the devout Mohammedans arouse from sleep and pray. At the first morning call the Muezzin adds also that "Prayer is better than sleep."

The Jews had their regular hours of prayer when they went up to the temple to worship. As long as the temple stood, probably, followers of Jesus continued to take part in the services there. One day after Pentecost Peter and John were going to the temple at one of the hours of prayer. What hour was it?

For Older Pupils. Last week we studied about the marvelous day of Pentecost, when all was excitement, when all the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with unwonted tongues. What will follow this time of ecstasy? What are the first words of to-day's text? "Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer," where was the lame man awaiting help.

After exaltation comes service. The transfiguration of the soul is the preparation and inspiration for the service of the life. "They that wait for Jehovah shall mount up with wings as eagles;" says Isaiah, and then he adds, "They shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." There will be hours of soaring, but the inspiration of those hours are for the days of running without weariness and the walking without faintness that follow. There are Beautiful Gates through which one may pass and have visions of God, but there are lowly entrances leading to opportunities for service, whose doing proves that the vision is abiding.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Hour of Prayer

The Need of the Hour of Prayer. Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer. There was always a place in their daily lives for communion with God. Prayer had an "hour," a definite time and place in their program of living. Their Master always had His hours of prayer. A great while before day He rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place and there prayed (Mark 1.35); He went up into the mountain to pray; and He continued all night in prayer to God (Luke 6.12); He went, as His custom was, unto the Mount of Olives...and He kneeled down and prayed (Luke 22. 39, 41).

If Jesus felt the need of daily prayer, how presumptuous are mortals who think they can live without it! Prayer is as necessary for man as winding is for a watch. As the watch must have strength imparted to its spring by daily winding, so man must have his strength reinforced by putting himself in daily connection with the Power above through prayer. If we have no time for the invisible and spiritual, how shall they become as real to us as the visible and material with which we are constantly occupied? The only way in these strenuous days to keep from becoming wholly the slaves of the things of time is to often hold communion with the Eternal. Our hope, Dr. John Watson tells us, must be that of the diver who goes down through the water but is supplied with air from above, so that while he is gathering treasures in the depths he is breathing another world.

What it Costs. Some one has said that to rise each morning with a thought

of God in the soul left over from the night before, and to kneel for the consecration of life and the renewed assurance of His guidance just for that day, is the true purpose of a beautiful life. We believe this. The poet counsels:

When first thine eyes unveil, give thy soul leave
To do the like: our bodies fore-run
The spirit's duty. True hearts spread and heave
Unto their Lord, as flowers do to the sun.
Give Him thy first thoughts, then, so shalt thou keep
Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

And we intend to heed his words. We think we have a little space of time fenced off night and morning which we will spend in prayer, but how often the encircling fence is broken down by the crowding duties and pleasures of the day! We are under pressure some day, there is so much to be done that the morning prayer must be omitted, we think, "just for this once;" we are so weary at night that the evening prayer is forgotten. Perhaps the broken fence is repaired the next day, but it is not so strong as it was before, and is more easily overthrown the second time than it was the first. If we are not on the watch the time comes at last when the multitude of this world's cares entirely claims the space we thought was sacredly devoted to God. Eternal vigilance is the price we must pay would we appropriate the blessings that come from unbroken communion with God.

It requires self-denial to maintain our prayer life. The lesser good must be given up for the greater good. The subject under discussion at a prayer-meeting one time was how to gain spiritual strength. One after another told what had helped him most, and then an earnest man arose and said that he had gained the greatest strength from prayer, and it had been his custom for many years to rise an hour earlier each day so as to have time for communion with God. A few of those present knew that this man's business required him to start to his work at four every morning, and yet he counted it gain to rise an hour earlier than he otherwise would in order to have time to pray.

A Royal Example. Wilhelmina, the Queen of the Netherlands, and her husband have their hour of prayer every morning at ten o'clock in the castle. A portion of Scripture is read, prayers are offered, and hymns are sung. Every one in the castle, visitors and servants, are invited but not compelled to attend this daily service. When the Queen first instituted this custom an editorial in a Holland daily paper thus commented: "We can not say how much we rejoice at this royal example. We are grateful to God for putting this thought into her Majesty's heart. Well for the Princess who so honors the word of God. Well for the land whose Queen bows in humility before the throne of God. And well for the people, if in every circle this royal example is valued and imitated."

II Blessings more Valuable than Money

Wealth versus Health. "You see the church can no longer say, like Peter, 'Silver and gold I have none,'" boasted Innocent the Fourth to Thomas Aquinas, and that great philosopher remarked in his turn, "Nor can she say, 'Rise up and walk.'"

When the beggar realized that strength had actually come to his limbs and he could walk like other men, he entered the temple "walking and leaping and praising God." How infinitely small the coin looked to him then, which he had hoped to receive from Peter, and how marvelously great the gift that had been given him! His experience has been repeated over and over in the centuries since. Money has been coveted as the greatest of all blessings, but when health has been lost in its pursuit how gladly would the sufferer give up his gold could he obtain what he now rightly esteems the far greater blessing, good health!

Gifts Better than Silver or Gold. Very familiar is the story told by Turgenieff in one of his parables of his gift to a beggar who held out his hands for alms. Turgenieff searched his pockets and then said to the man, "I am sorry, brother, I have nothing for thee." But joy came into the beggar's face.

"That is enough," he said, "You have given me more than money, for you have called me brother." The gifts whose value can not be estimated in dollars and cents are the ones which the world could not get along without—gifts of smiles and of sympathy, of encouragement and of love. "One must be poor to know the luxury of giving," says one who knows; certain it is that the gifts more valuable than money every one can give, whether rich or poor in silver and gold. Mary Mapes Dodge tells us what are the choicest gifts:

From friend to friend the choicest gift
  That ever love can give
Is that which comes the heart to lift,
  Or help the soul to live.
Of all fair bounties ever sought,
  Of gems or jewels rare,
What treasure like a lovely thought
  Or love's far-reaching prayer.

"Lincoln has nothing, only plenty of friends," it was said when he was nominated for the presidency. We know that when elected he was so poor that he had to borrow money in order to move his family to Washington, but we know also how very rich he was in his friends.

True Riches. Ruskin tells of a passenger on a sinking ship who filled a belt about his waist with gold ore. After the wreck his body was found at the bottom of the bay. "Now had he the gold, or had the gold him?" questions Ruskin. At another time this great writer says: "There is no wealth but life—life, including all its powers of love, of joy, of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy beings. That man is the richest, who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the uttermost, has also the widest influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others." A noble, true-hearted Christian, who has himself attained the best being possible to him, who exerts a wide influence over others, has the richest gifts to bestow, whatever he possesses, for he is rich in what is of the greatest value, he has the means to create well-being and well-doing in others.

"I have no time to make money" said Professor Agassiz, and he was right, his time was more valuable to the world than any number of millions which he might have accumulated and given away.

III Missionary Topic Medical Missions

Modern Miracles. "Miracles are bells to call the people to Christ." The curing of the lame man brought a great crowd around Peter and John in Solomon's Porch, and gave Peter opportunity to tell them about Jesus. The result was, we are told in the fourth verse of the next chapter, that "many of them that heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to be about five thousand."

Medical missionaries of to-day can not perform miracles and heal instantaneously, but they perform many gradual cures that seem no less than miracles to the people. It is interesting to know that there is a medical mission called "The Sea of Galilee Mission," located at Tiberias, in the very region where Jesus went about doing good and healing all that were brought to Him for cure.

"Medicine has been the magic key which has opened every door of fanaticism, bigotry and opposition," a missionary in Persia writes in the *Missionary Review of the World*. "They have seen the lame carried into our hospitals and go out walking. They have seen the blind led in and go out seeing. When native physicians were fleeing in terror from the cholera-stricken cities they have seen us organizing relief work, dispensing medicines, and opening emergency hospitals to fight the scourge. They have come to believe in the missionaries as men who are in Persia not for any selfish reasons, but who are the sincere seekers of the welfare of Persia and sincere servants of God."

The Need of Medical Missionaries. There are no native physicians in the mission fields who have any knowledge of medical science or know how to relieve their patients. They make use of strange remedies. Sometimes they seek

to expel the evil spirit that has brought the disease, as they think, by burning the patient's body with hot irons. In a recent missionary paper is given a prescription of a Chinese physician for a patient who had swallowed poison. It called for two salted lizards, ginseng root, six dried grasshoppers, lotus-leaves, walnuts, part of the tail of rattlesnake, black dates, elm tree bark, devilfish claw, heartshorn, birds' claws, dried ginger, and old coffin nails, the whole to be mixed with two quarts of water and boiled down to half the quantity. The direction was that it should all be swallowed as quickly as possible; it took half a day to make up the compound.

It is estimated that in all the Protestant mission hospitals in the world 100,000 patients can be accommodated and 2,500,000 patients can be treated annually. This seems to be a vast work, but it is only a beginning. India alone has 200 medical missionaries, but it has a population of 300,000,000 and has over 66,000 lunatics, 153,000 deaf and dumb, 354,000 blind and 400,000 lepers.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Where there is most weal there is most wealth. *A. M. Fairbairn.*

When thou seest misery in thy brother's face, let him see mercy in thine eye. *Quarles.*

Service is the coin in which humanity's greatest debts are paid. *William Allen White.*

He who estimates his money the highest values himself the least. *Orison Swett Marden.*

He is the poor man who can say, Silver and gold have I only.

Not all who are amazed at Christ's power are saved by Christ's pardon.

The sympathy you hesitated to offer because it was all you had at hand was the thing most needed by your struggling friend. *O. P. Fitzgerald.*

It is only necessary to be good and brave and true and patient and we give our brethren gifts far beyond all value, great, generous impulses and strong, true principles. *Phillips Brooks.*

If there be with thee a poor man...thou shalt surely open thy hand unto him. Deut. 15.7, 8.

The righteous taketh knowledge of the cause of the poor. Prov. 29.7.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

We pity the man who is lame, but we need one and all to follow the counsel of our poet Lowell:

> Look inward through the depths of thine own soul,
> How is it with thee? are thou sound and whole?

The lame beggar sat by the gate and repeated over and over the same words, not looking for something from every one that passed, perhaps not even thinking of what he was saying, certainly not expecting the great gift that Peter had been given power to bestow. Do you never make the same requests of your heavenly Father in the same words day after day, giving little heed to what you are saying, having little expectation of receiving what you ask, and with no thought that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think?

When the lame man found himself able to walk, he went about praising God. Do we always acknowledge even in our hearts the great blessings we have received from God?

Are we freely giving to others the great gifts which all of us have to bestow, the gifts which are of more value than silver and gold?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The two great friends, Peter and John, as well as the other apostles, still worshipped in the temple, for they had no thought of separating themselves

from their nation and its religious observances. As they were entering the temple at the afternoon hour of prayer, a man who had been lame from birth was being carried towards the gate called Beautiful, where he was wont to sit and beg. Listlessly he asked Peter and John to give him something; they gazed at him intently while Peter said, Look on us. This aroused the man, and he looked expectantly, thinking he was to receive a gift of money. Peter's next words disappointed him, for Peter said that he had no money to give, but he would give him something else. Then through the power of Jesus Christ Peter bade him walk, this man who had never walked in his life. With wonderful faith in Christ's power, and with readiness to give his own help and sympathy, Peter took the man by the hand and raised him up. Suddenly strength came to his feet and ankles and he leaped up, stood a moment, began to walk, and then in joy and gratitude went with them, leaping and praising God. Probably they entered the Court of the Women and engaged in worship, and then came back together into the outer Court, or Court of the Gentiles.

When the people saw this man walking and leaping they gathered around him and the apostles in Solomon's Porch, and gazed on the apostles in great amazement. Peter quickly disclaimed all power of his own in the miracle and siezed the opportunity to preach to the throng. It was faith in Jesus Christ, he told them, that had made this man strong and sound, this Christ whom the God of their fathers had glorified by proving His power in this "sign"; whom they had delivered up to Pilate, the Holy and Righteous One whom they had refused to have freed as Pilate himself wished, but had demanded in His stead a murderer, the Prince of Life whom they had killed but whom God had raised from the dead as His disciples could testify.

Boldly Peter thus accused the people of being guilty as well as their rulers, but, he added, they had been ignorant. God had fulfilled His will, that Christ should suffer, even as their prophets had forshadowed it. Therefore let them repent of their guilt and turn to Jesus, that their sins might be blotted out, and the Messianic Kingdom might be realized, as all the prophets had foretold. He appealed to them to believe the prophets and to accept the covenant of blessing first made to Abraham, of whom they were sons and heirs, now fulfilled by God in raising up Jesus Christ His Servant from the dead, who was able to turn them from their sins.

"A greater miracle than the cure of the lame man is this sermon of Peter's," says Dr. Parker, "Such a man must succeed in his ministry or be killed."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Christ's standard of values. See chapter VII of "Christianity and Social Problems," by Dr. Lyman Abbott.

2. Modern Medical Missions. See Edgar Allen Forbes' "American Healing around the World" in the *World's Work* for December, 1907, or Cyrus C. Adams' "The Civilizing Work of Modern Christian Missions" in the *Review of Reviews* for February, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What was the relationship between Annas and Caiaphas? (John 18.13.) 2. For what saying is Caiaphas noted? (John 18.14.) 3. Where in the Old Testament is the quotation of verse 11 found? (See the Concordance of your Bible under the word *Stone*, or the marginal reference to verse 11 in your Bible.) Where in the Gospels is it quoted? 4. What does the eleventh verse mean? 5. With Peter's present boldness of speech compare Matthew 26.69-75. 6. To what is his fearlessness now ascribed? (Verses 8, 13.) 7. What writings prove that Peter and John were not unlearned and ignorant as these terms mean to us? (Epistles of Peter, Gospel and Epistles of John.) 8. How do we know that John, at least, was already known to Annas or Caiaphas? (John 18.15.) 9. How had the Sanhedrin silenced the parents of the blind man to whom Jesus gave sight? (John 9.22.) 10. How had some of the rulers been silenced? (John 12.42.) 11. What were the things the apostles saw and heard, verse 20?

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LESSON V—JANUARY 31

THE TRIAL OF PETER AND JOHN

Read Acts 4.1-31. Commit verses 11, 12.

Golden Text

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Acts 4.31.

LESSON TEXT Acts 4.5-20

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; 6 and Annas the high priest *was there,* and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, 9 if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; 10 be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* in him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. 12 And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: 20 for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED.

5. *On the morrow.* The day after the arrest of Peter and John, verse 3.—*Rulers and elders and scribes.* The Sanhedrin, or highest council of the Jews. The *rulers* were the chief priests; the *elders,* the representatives of the people; the *scribes,* the nobles and expounders of the law.—*Were gathered together in Jerusalem.* This clause in the R. V. is taken from the sixth verse and joined to the fifth.

6. *Annas the high priest was there.* See page 65.—*Caiaphas.* The high priest. See John 11.49.—*John and Alexander.* Not mentioned elsewhere.

7. *Them.* Peter and John (verse 3) and the man who had been lame (verse 10).—*By what power or in what name.* Compare the question put to Jesus by a deputation from the Sanhedrin after the cleansing of the temple, Luke 20.1, 2. It has been suggested that the Sanhedrin may have hoped to pronounce them guilty under the law stated in Deut. 13.1-5, as prophets who said, Let us go after other gods, for the Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus as a false Messiah.

8. *Filled with the Holy Spirit.* See the promises made by Jesus to the disciples, Luke 12.11, 12; 21.14, 15; Mark 13.11.

9. *Good deed.* Compare Jesus' words in John 10.32.—*Impotent.* Feeble, infirm.—*This man.* See verses 10 and 14.—*Whole.* Sound in body. Our words *whole, hale,* and *health* all come from the same Anglo-Saxon word *hàl.*

11. *He.* Christ.—*The stone.* Psa. 118.22. Jesus quotes the words as referring to Himself, Matt. 21.42-44.—*Set at nought.* Regarded as of no account, despised. Mark 9.12.—*The head of the corner.* Instead of this figure of the cornerstone, that of the keystone would perhaps have been used had the arch been in common use. The use of the arch for bridges originated with the Romans.

12. *In none other is there salvation. Thou art my salvation* are the words which precede in the Psalms the words quoted in verse 11. The Greek has the article *the salvation.—Under heaven.* In all the earth.—*We must be saved. We* in Greek has an emphatic position at the end of the sentence, as has also *Ye* in verse 7. By what name, have ye, ignorant men, done this? There is no other name wherein we,—you the judges and we the fishermen—must be saved.

13. *Boldness.* The Greek word παῤῥησία means literally free-speaking.—*Unlearned.* The Greek ἀγράμματοι means *without letters;* they were untrained as rabbis.—*Ignorant.* The Greek ἰδιῶται means *private persons,* not engaged in public office, common people. Perhaps our word *laymen* would give the actual thought of the rulers here.—*They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.* Some scholars interpret this to mean merely that "their wonder sharpened their recollection," as Meyer says, and now, apparently for the first time, they recognize them as disciples of Jesus. Yet recalling the words of the Jews in regard to Jesus—How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (John 7.15)—it seems rather that they recognized the fact that Peter and John had grown like their Master.

14. *With them.* With Peter and John.

15. *When they had commanded them to go aside.* Probably it was their practice to send away a prisoner while they held their discussions.

19. *Judge ye.* The apostles are respectful to their judges, and make an appeal to their consciences. Compare Acts 5.29.

20. *The things which we saw and heard.* They saw the life and character of Jesus, and heard His teachings. Compare 1 Cor. 9.16.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

6. *Annas the high priest.* He had been in office in A. D. 7-14, but had been deposed by the Roman governor. Yet "once a high priest, always a high priest" was the feeling of the Jews, at any rate as regards one deposed by the alien. Hence he retained the preëminence of honor and influence which is reflected in this passage, the more so that Caiaphas, the actual high priest at this time (A. D. 25-37) was his son-in-law. Indeed, Annas' family proved a sort of high-priestly clique, two sons of his successively holding the office, after Caiaphas was deposed in A. D. 37. *J. Vernon Bartlet, The Acts.*

10. *Whom God raised from the dead.* There is a very remarkable contrast between the way in which we should have expected the apostles to defend the resurrection, or in which we should have defended it, and the way in which they did defend it. When we are opposed by the Sadducees at the present day with questions about the resurrection of Christ, this is the method of proof we adduce: We point to the empty grave and ask—What did become of His body? and we argue from the folded grave clothes laid so quietly and reverently, as by the hands of one who has appreciated the loving act of the women, in their place, and we say, "Surely the body was not taken by robbers or these clothes would not have been left so neatly behind, and it could not have been taken by friends for they would not have taken it away naked." We adduce the fact that the witness to the resurrection is given by people who did not expect Christ to rise and who had everything to lose by attesting the resurrection.

The Holy Spirit who suddenly filled Peter led him to another line of truth. He said: "Do you ask me by what power or name that man stands there sound

and whole? There is only one answer,—Jesus of Nazareth whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead, is living still and in Him resides all saving efficiency and power, and He has given a proof that He so lives because that man is living and throbbing to-day with the pulse of His energy." He did not go back six weeks to prove the resurrection from what he had seen of the living Christ, but he lifted all their thoughts to Him, the source of the living power which had poured into that man's paralized limbs and made him stand there whole. Christ lives, *there* is the proof!

If you wanted to prove that there is a sun, you would not go to some museum and find a geological specimen of some animal that had lived long ages ago and apply your microscope to its eyes (or the sockets where its eyes should be) to find there an indication that those eyes had been constructed for the light, and argue that because the eye had been so constructed, therefore the sun must have shone long before history began. No, you would go at once and stand beneath the sun and point to it.

The sun is shining to-day. And if only the Church of to-day would take Peter's attitude, it would not argue from the witness of the past, but from the living experience of the present to Him that was, and is, and is to come. *F. B. Meyer,* in *The Homiletic Review.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

7. *When they had set them in the midst.* Peter and John, and the man who had been lame, stood facing the members of the Sanhedrin who sat in a semi-circle. In the midst of the semi-circle, on elevated seats, were the officers—the patriarch or president, the father of the house of judgment, or vice-president, and the sage, or referee—while the members themselves sat on low cushions, with their knees bent and crossed in the usual oriental manner. In front of the Sanhedrin sat three rows of disciples. Two scribes, or notaries, one on each side, faced the council: the one registered the reasons for acquital of prisoners; the other, the reasons for condemnation.

The Sanhedrin consisted of seventy members besides the president: priests, elders of the people, and scribes. Their sessions were held every day except Sabbaths and festival days, and lasted from the close of the morning sacrifice until the beginning of the evening sacrifice. No one could be a member of the Sanhedrin who was not "Morally and physically blameless, middle-aged, tall, good-looking, wealthy, learned both in the divine law and divers branches of profane service, such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, magic, and versed in several languages."

11. *The stone which was set at nought of you the builders.* The riches hid below the surface of the earth belonged to the Emperor. All quarries were managed by his own private officers for his private purse. Every block quarried was inspected by the proper officer, and marked by him as approved (*Probante*). Our knowledge of this subject has been for the most part derived from blocks actually found in Rome, which, therefore, were choice blocks sent to the capital. But at the Phyrygian marble quarries there have been found many blocks which had been cut but not sent on to Rome. These are never marked as approved; and some of them bear the letters REPR *i. e. reprobatum.* rejected. This custom of testing, and sometimes rejecting, blocks for building purposes, was consistent with the words of Peter. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Expositor.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In his first sermon, on the great day of Pentecost, Peter ascribed to Christ the coming of the Holy Spirit and appealed to the conscience of his hearers, their sense of guilt in having crucified their King. Three thousand were converted and joined the Christian fellowship. In his second sermon, after the healing of the lame man, Peter ascribed the miracle to faith in the power of Jesus Christ, again accused the people of guilt in crucifying Him, and appealed to them to accept Him as the One who fulfilled their hopes, the One promised to their fathers and foretold by their prophets. Many more believed and their

conversion then brought the number of Christ's followers to five thousand.

Peter's second address was abruptly broken off by the coming of Christ's enemies. Hitherto the rulers had paid no heed to the work of the apostles. Either they did not know or they ignored the many wonders and signs wrought by the apostles and the growing numbers who believed in the Nazarene, but now the attention of priests, the captain of the temple and Sadducees, was drawn to the great concourse of people in Solomon's Porch. They were greatly offended at Peter's preaching, for the Sadducees did not believe in the immortality of the soul, and in proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus, Peter was preaching this doctrine. They arrested the two apostles, and because it was evening, time for the guards to close the temple gates and too late for a trial, they put the two in prison for the night. The first of the long line of persecutions was begun.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After their arrest in Solomon's Porch the apostles were kept in prison during the night, and in the morning were brought before the Sanhedrin for trial. The meeting-place of the Sanhedrin had been in a hall called *Gazith,* within the temple area, but it is thought that at this time they met in a hall on Mount Moriah outside the temple precincts.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, was put in prison because he preached the Gospel, and was threatened with banishment from the country if, on his release, he continued to preach. But he said to his persecutors, "If I were out of prison to-day, I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God."

The rulers of the Jews were troubled because Peter and John taught the people that Jesus had arisen from the dead. Because they preached the Gospel the apostles were put in prison over night, and then brought before the Great Court for a trial. Let us see how they accepted the command not to preach again after their release.

For Older Pupils. "If they persecute me, they will also persecute you," Christ had told His disciples in His last farewell talk. "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God. These things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you." To-day we hear about the first one of the many persecutions which the apostles suffered as Christ had forewarned them.

It was no wonder that the Jewish rulers were troubled because the disciples proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. If Jesus had indeed arisen, then was He the Messiah, and then were they guilty of putting to death their King. The people were believing the witness of the apostles, the membership of the new sect was growing. The healing of the lame man was a miracle such as Jesus Himself had wrought, and it had convinced many that the apostles wielded the same power that was Jesus'. "If we let him alone, all men will believe on him," they had said after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Now after the apostles had raised up the lame man, if they are let alone, will not all men believe in them and in Jesus as the Christ?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Mark of a True Disciple

They had been with Jesus. In the gallery at Dresden there is a wonderful portrait painted by Titian. It is the face of a brother artist which we first see, whose features stand out from the canvas clear and full of life. But as we gaze, we see in the background Titian's own face dimly portrayed; he is looking, not at us, but at the face in the foreground. What the artist has accomplished on canvas Peter and John and the other apostles accomplished in their lives. They always placed Christ in the foreground, and they were always looking at their Master; others could see that they were absorbed in Him

and His interests. Even the members of the Sanhedrin marveled at them, and bore their testimony to the fact that they had been with Jesus.

They shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. In these words of Revelations, John expresses the thought that those who shall dwell in the City of God shall exhibit evidence of their belonging wholly to Him. John himself had shown this evidence when he stood with Peter before the rulers and elders and scribes.

An artist was sent by a newspaper editor to a meeting of the Salvation Army in England for the purpose of studying the faces there and caricaturing them. The errand was not unpleasing to him, for he was an infidel and had no sympathy with such Christian soldiers. But as he watched the eager faces and saw their joy in their service, he was convinced that these people had something which he had not. He could not carry out his commission; he took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus, and at length he himself was led to seek and own the same Saviour.

Copies. You see in shops poor little plaster casts of the great statues that enchant the world; carricatures they sometimes look like, and they are wrought in a worthless, perishable material. Well, if we cannot do better, let us try to make such a cast of the serene perfectness of Christ's life in our little lives. The original is marble, our copy is plaster of Paris. All the sharp lines may be blunted in an attempted reproduction, and the beauty all but gone, and yet there may be a faint hint of likeness. People whose aesthetic perceptions are but slightly cultivated do not see much difference between Michael Angelo's tremendous statues and the little copies of them that you can buy on the quays at Florence. And some people who cannot look at Jesus Christ, or who will not look at Him, and have not, perhaps, grown up enough to appreciate the Divine perfection of that life, may have their defective power of appreciation stimulated by looking at us, and may be brought to say, "If the copy be fair, so much fairer than the average man around us, how fairer must the Original be; and how mighty must be the power, which out of such worthless, cheap material, can fashion that which has a hint of Jesus, though it is so incomplete a likeness." *Alexander Maclaren.*

How Christ's Mark may be set on His Followers. Did you ever watch a little child taking a lesson in model drawing? Never two strokes of the pencil without a glance at the model. And the first law and the last law of the imitation of Christ is just this—"looking unto Jesus." We fix our eyes upon Him; we must hold Him steadily in our hearts and in our minds until just as the sunlight prints the object on the sensitized plate of the camera, so we, "beholding, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory." We grow like those we live with, those we love; every day beholding we are transformed, and the same law holds here. If we are so little like Christ, is it not because we are so little with Christ? *George Jackson.*

II Moral Heroes

God only need be feared. Chrysostom, the archbishop of Constantinople, was a fearless reformer. He called evils by their right names, and was as relentless in his denunciation of those high in authority as those in lowly position. He aroused the hatred of the Empress, and she commanded an official to threaten him that unless he moderated his zeal she would have him removed from his office and cast into prison, or even put to death. "Of what use will it be to say all that to a man who is afraid of nothing save of sin?" questioned the official.

The members of the Sanhedrin wished Peter and John to moderate their zeal as witnesses for Christ. They commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, and they threatened them, probably telling them that if they disobeyed they should be imprisoned and perhaps put to death. But what use was it to threaten such heroes as these who feared only God?

Peter appealed to the conscience of his tormentors, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye," he said, and then he boldly added, "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." He who fears God need not fear men. He has the right fear.

When the charge was brought against Socrates of neglecting his country's gods and corrupting the youth of the land by his teaching, and he was condemned to death, that noble philosopher said, "O ye Athenians, I will obey God rather than you; and, if you would dismiss me and spare my life, on condition that I would cease to teach my fellow-citizens, I would rather die a thousand times than accept your proposal."

Modern Heroes who fear not Men. At the time when San Francisco was a city of universal graft, in the control of Ruef, Schmitz and their allies, who were so thoroughly corrupt that the whole country was aghast when the magnitude and baseness of their dealings were exposed, a little group of honest men made an effort to overthrow their power. Among them were Mr. Fremont Older, the managing editor of the San Francisco Bulletin, who was fearless in his editorials denouncing the situation, and Mr. Rudolph Spreckles, a young millionaire. Mr. Spreckles thought he could persuade twelve or fifteen wealthy and influential citizens to organize a good government club, and help conduct a prosecution of all dishonest officials. He found, however, that he could not. They were afraid. Mr. Spreckles reported the result and said: "I can't get fifteen men, I can't get ten men, I can't get even five men. Now I'm going to form a committee of one—Rudolph Spreckles. They can't throw me down, and I'll guarantee the one hundred thousand dollars for the expenses of the prosecution."

Mr. Francis J. Henry was asked to undertake the work of prosecuting the grafters. (This history is told by Mr. George Kennan in *McClure's Magazine* of September, 1907.) Mr. Henry thought it his duty to warn Mr. Spreckles of the possible result of a fearless investigation. "If you carry this fight through to a finish," he said, "without discrimination and without favor, you may ultimately find yourself up against men of wealth, power, and high social position. Some of them may even be your personal associates and friends. They will naturally turn against you, and in defending themselves they will do you all the harm they can. You must be prepared for loss of friends, injury to your business, false statements about your character and motives, and worries and annoyances of all kinds. You must even be ready to take the risk of assassination, because when men are threatened with the penitentiary and see no other way of escape they sometimes commit murder, or hire it done."

Mr. Spreckles replied that he was prepared to take the risk, and asked Mr. Henry what he would charge for giving up everything and devoting himself entirely to the prosecution. "If you," returned Mr. Henry, "a man of wealth, a man who doesn't have to go into things of this kind, are willing to give it your time and your money, to sacrifice your comfort, and, if necessary, your business and your friends, in order to put up a fight for honest government, I should be a poor sort of creature if I were not willing to make some sacrifices myself. I'll conduct the prosecution without pay."

III Missionary Topic In None Other is there Salvation

The Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sin of the World. A noted English preacher, the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, has related an experience of one of his evangelistic services in London. A hardened criminal came forward to the altar seeking salvation. Mr. Morgan knelt beside him and pointed him to Jesus as the Lamb of God who could cleanse him from all his sins. And he who had been a great sinner believed and was converted. Then Mr. Morgan saw the Mayor of the City, a man of high morals and greatly respected, kneeling at the same altar, and to him, as to the criminal, he pointed out the Lamb of God who alone could take away sins, and in humble self-surrender the Mayor, too, accepted Jesus as his Saviour. A short time before this the Mayor had sentenced the criminal to imprisonment, and there at the altar the two shook hands while tears of joy ran down their cheeks. For the worst of sinners and for the best of moralists there is the same Saviour. In none other is there salvation, for neither is there any other name under heaven, wherein we must be saved.

A Question asked and answered. Dr. Clafford, in his book entitled "Inspiration," says that a high priest came to his tent one night and asked him this

question: "What is it that makes that Bible of yours have such power over the lives of those who embrace it? Now it is but eight months since the people joined you. Before, they were quarrelsome; they were riotous; they were lazy; and now see what a difference there is in them! Now they are active, energetic, laborious. They never drink; they never quarrel. In all the region around here, the people all respect and honor them. What is it that makes the Bible have such power over the lives of those who profess it? Our Vedas have no such power. Please, sir, give me the secret."

This editorial from *The Sunday School Times* is an answer to all such questions: "The laws of duty and morality, which are beautifully expressed by the Old and New Testaments, can be found often in other religions, also there beautifully expressed. The difference seems to be in that one word which Matthew Arnold said characterized the lofty teachings of Marcus Aurelius—beautiful, righteous, but 'ineffectual.' The effectuality with which Christ has brought His lofty precepts to apply in the world is the most distinctive feature of the Christian faith. And how was this done? Simply by putting behind every high and glorious law one supreme motive. Christ set every law, every duty, against a background of love. He nailed them to the cross. How many soldiers hear the command who will follow it only when some loved leader goes with them! Even so the world hears Christ's commands because the loved Master has gone with the world. 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' Therein lies the sharpest line of division between Christianity and any other faith that was ever preached."

The Testimony of a Professor in the University of Oxford. I have devoted as much time as any man living to the study of the sacred books of the East, and I have found the one key-note, the one refrain through all—salvation by works. Let us not shut our eyes to what is excellent and true and of good report in these books, but let us teach Hindus, Buddhists, Mohammedans, that there is only one book whose gospel can be their mainstay in that awful hour when they pass all alone into the unseen world. It is the sacred book that contains that faithful saying that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. *Max Müller.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Fearless minds climb soonest into crowns. *Shakespeare.*

Dare to do right; fear to do wrong. *Baron Rothschild.*

If you have enlisted for Christ as your Redeemer and your Master, then always and everywhere show your colors. *T. L. Cuyler.*

Do not fear the face of men: remember how small their anger will appear in eternity. *Robert McCheyne.*

If you want your neighbor to know what the Christ spirit will do for him, let him see what it has done for you. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

How much trouble he avoids who does not look to see what his neighbor says or does, but only to what he does himself, that it may be just and pure. *Marcus Aurelius.*

Thou, O Christ, shalt become the corner-stone of humanity so completely, that to tear Thy name from the world would be to rend it to its foundations. *Renan.*

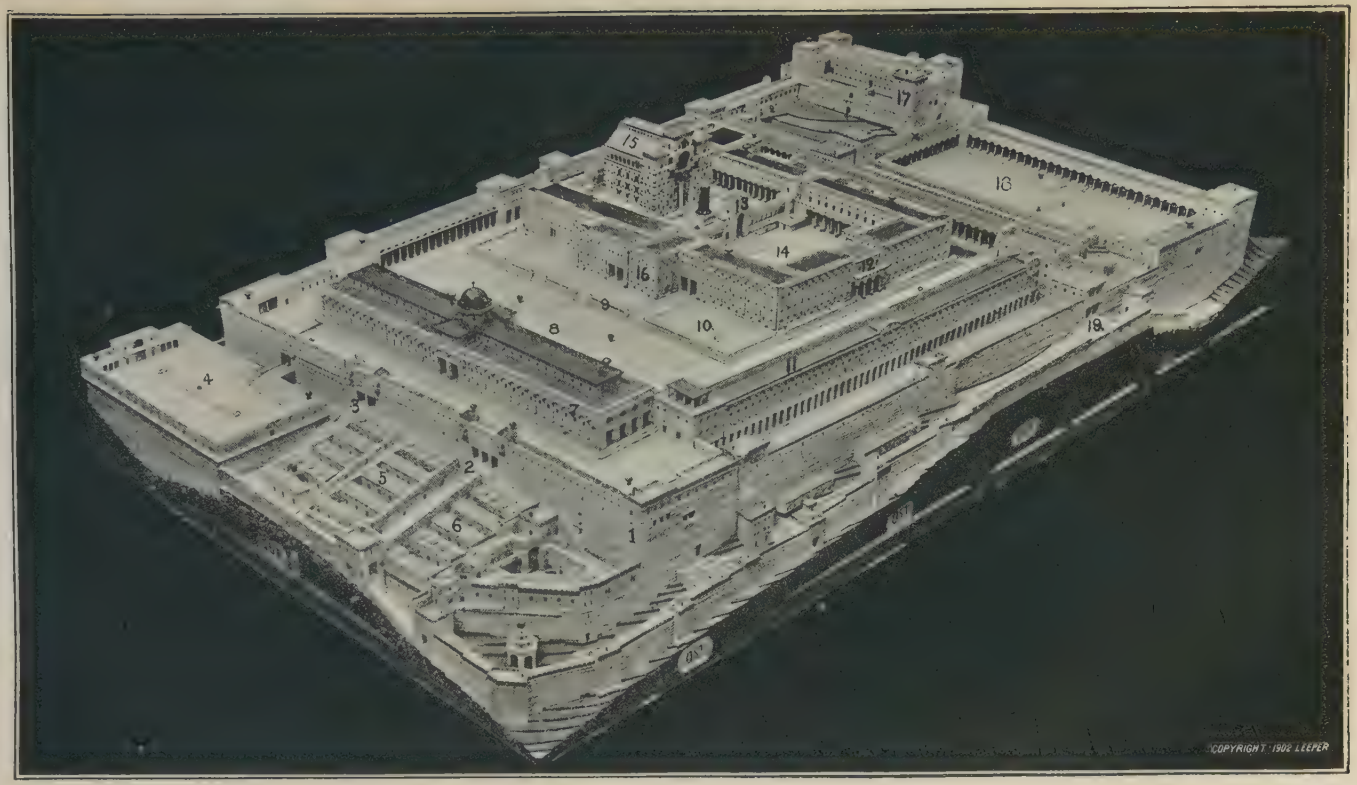
Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Eph. 6.13.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

He who made so noble a witness bearer out of such unpromising material as the one who denied his Lord, can do so always.

I am the Way, said Jesus. Do we follow Him? Would any one have reason to doubt that, like Peter and John, we have been with Him?

We have no cause to fear that we shall suffer for bearing our witness for Christ, but do we never fear what others may say about us should we do this? Such fear is usually as groundless as was that of Bishop Matthew Simpson when a young man. He felt that he ought to speak at prayer-meeting one



THE TEMPLE AT THE TIME OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL

The temple and its courts occupied a plateau formed by building a wall (Fig. 1) around the summit of Mt. Moriah. The parts were as follows: 7, Herod's Porch; 8, the Gentile Court; 9, Wall of Partition (Ephesians 2:14), no Gentile could go beyond this point; 10, Court of Israel. Jesus drove the dove-hawkers from 10 to 8; 11, Solomon's Porch; 12, the Gate Beautiful; here Peter and John found the lame beggar and here Paul was arrested and taken to 17, the Tower of Antonio; 14, Court of the Women and Treasury; 13, the Gate Nicanor; 15, the central structure which contained the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Hall of Judgment and the King's Palace occupied the position of 5, 6 and 7.

Sunday evening in the absence of the minister, but he said to himself, "How can I? I shall make a fool of myself. What will my uncle say?" But that uncle whom he dreaded, came to him and said, "Don't you think you could speak to the people to-night? I think you can do good." When he told his mother that he had decided to become a preacher, he feared what she would say, but she smiled and said, "My son, I have been looking for this hour ever since you were born."

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Peter and John stand as prisoners in the presence of the great Jewish tribunal at Jerusalem. Annas and Caiaphas, before whom Jesus had been brought after His arrest, the one called the high priest, the other the actual high priest, Alexander and John, and other great officials were present. "By what power or in what name, have ye done this?" the court asks. Boldly Peter answers, for he is filled with the Holy Spirit: "Seemingly we are on trial for a good deed done to a helpless man. Know, ye rulers and all the people of Israel, that this man here stands sound and whole before you through the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead. Ye condemned Jesus as a false Messiah; by raising Him from the dead God has proved Him to be the true Messiah, and thus the stone which ye, the builders (because of your office) of God's spiritual house, have flung aside as worthless. has become the head of the corner, the only sure foundation on which can rest the hope of eternal life. In no one else is there salvation; no other name has been given wherein we must be saved."

Can this preacher be the man who once flinched before a maid servant of the high priest? Amazed the rulers listened to his words. Such plain speaking to superiors from men who are untrained in rabbinical schools and unauthorized to teach is passing strange; it can only be accounted for, they think, by the influence of their association with Jesus.

They order the prisoners removed while they consider what is best to be done. "We can not deny the miracle," the admit, "because the man that was healed is here to prove it, and it is known throughout the city. We will warn them to teach no more in the name of Jesus, and they know full well that if they disobey they may suffer the same fate that He did." Peter and John are recalled and charged neither to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus.

Peter first appeals to the conscience of the judges; "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye," he says, and then he boldly announces their determination not to obey the command. "We can not but speak the things which we saw and heard." Thus the rulers learn that they can not silence the apostles, but in their helplessness because of their fear of the people they merely threaten the apostles and let them go.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Times when silence would be treachery.
2. "Hush-up" policy.
3. The courage of convictions.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What is the meaning of the phrase "of one heart and soul"? 2. What command of Jesus was fulfilled by the people of this early Christian Church? (Matt. 22.39.) 3. What was said about the life of the first Christians in Acts 2.42-47? 4. Where is Cyprus? 5. What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira? How was the sin shown? What was the motive that prompted it? 6. What did Jesus say about doing things to gain the approval of men, in Matt. 6.1-18? 7. Why is Ananias rather than Peter who denied his Lord taken as the type of a liar? 8. What effect did the punishment meted out to Ananias and Sapphira have on the growth of the Church? (Acts 5.13, 14.) 9. Tell the story of the sin and punishment of Nadab and Abihu. (Lev. 10.1-11.) 10. Tell the story of Achan. (Josh. 7.) 11. The story of Gahazi's avarice. (11 Kings 5.20-27.)

LESSON VI—FEBRUARY 7

TRUE AND FALSE BROTHERHOOD

Read Acts 4.32-5.11. Commit verses 32, 33.

Golden Text

Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah; but they that deal truly are his delight. Prov. 12.22.

LESSON TEXT Acts 4.32-5.11

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one *of them* said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.

36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, 37 having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

5 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? 4 While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it. 6 And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 But Peter *said* unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? behold the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. 10 And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

32. *Of one heart and soul.* A proverbial expression for the greatest unity of feeling and purpose.—*They had all things common.* Because of 5.4, this seems to mean that each one regarded his own property as held in trust for others, not that all individual ownership was given up.

33. *Great grace was upon them all.* Grace from God; God's free favor was helping them.

34. *For.* This word indicates that the generosity recorded in this verse was the proof of the divine grace recorded in the last verse.—*As many as were possessors.* From the entire account it seems that this selling of possessions for others was not universal, but was done now and then as the need for help arose.

35. *Laid them at the apostles' feet* is a figurative expression, arising probably from the oriental custom of laying gifts at the feet of kings, and meaning merely

that the gifts were left in the apostles' control. The apostles afterwards begged to be relieved from this duty, Acts 6.1-6.

36. *Barnabas.* "He will become a prominent figure in the church. In fact, in the calendar of the English Church he is entitled an 'apostle,' and he is the only saint (besides St. Paul and the Evangelists) outside the Twelve who is honored with a red letter day" (*Rackham*).—*Son of exhortation.* "The word is compounded of *Bar* and *Nabi,* and literally signifies the son of a prophet, or of prophecy. According to the New Testament language, prophecy is not so much the prediction of the future, as an inspired discourse, and embraces both exhortation and consolation. Barnabas was probably so called on account of his remarkable powers of exhorting the people, and administering to them consolation. See Acts 11.23" (*Gloag*).

37. *Having a field.* Because the Levites had no share in the land of Canaan under the old Mosaic law (Num. 18.20-24), it has been suggested that this field was in Cyprus.

1. *But.* In contrast with Barnabas' true generosity.—*Ananias.* "Jehovah is gracious."—*Sapphira.* "Beautiful." "Their names were favorable and beautiful; their principles bad" (*Bengel*).

2. *His wife also being privy to it.* They had planned together the deceit.

3. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart?.* "The cause of the overt act is a heart *filled* with sin; for that is why Satan fills the heart" (*Abbott*).—*To lie.* R. V. Margin, *to deceive.* A lie may be acted as well as spoken.—*Holy Spirit.* "It is much to be noticed how from the first the apostles disclaim any power in themselves. It is Christ who works the miracles, the God of Abraham who gives the power of healing, and the Holy Spirit who is grieved by sins like that of Ananias" (*Lumby*).

4. This verse shows that the selling of property was wholly voluntary.—*Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* See Psa. 51.4.

5. *Gave up the ghost.* Died.

6. *The young men.* The Greek word is *younger men.*

7. *Came in.* To the assembly, which was still in session.

8. *Answered.* Perhaps he answered an inquiry of hers not recorded or her salutation, but the Hebraistic use of this verb does not require a preceding question.—*So much.* And no more.

9. *Try.* Put to the proof whether the Holy Spirit was present and could be deceived.—*And they shall carry thee out.* "Peter speaks as a prophet, not as a judge; he does not give sentence, he foretells" (*Abbott*).

11. *Great fear.* See Prov. 1.7; 1 Cor. 10.11.—*The whole church.* This is the first time that the word *church* is used to designate the Christian community.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

32. *They were of one heart and soul.* My own idea of a church is a great religious democracy, where the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, the cultured, and all others, gather to worship and commune with a Being so far exalted as to make relative human conditions unmentionable, unthinkable, and unnoticeable in His presence. To me there is nothing more inspiring than a promiscuous crowd going to and from a common sanctuary. *Leslie M. Shaw.*

9. *How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord?* The five thousand are no longer under the direction of the Great Council. They are a compact body with "one heart and one soul." Their independence confers a dignity upon them. God had removed them from Judaism, and was among them. All the sacredness that had once belonged to the tabernacle and the temple was now transferred to them. They were a holy body. This is the lesson of this section, and this the church itself, as well as the Jewish mass around it, did not know until God's judgment gleamed among them. This ignorance was not justifiable, but inevitable. Men are slow to learn reverence in God's presence. Moses does not put off his shoes before the burning bush until commanded. If Nadab and Abihu can see no difference between the holy tabernacle and an Egyptian shrine, the stroke of sudden death must teach it. If a David will place God's ark on a cart, and not carry it on the shoulders of men as the law prescribed, one of his chief men must die. The judgment on An-

anias and Sapphira was of the same character and for the same purpose. God would teach that nothing unhallowed can be admitted in the service of His house. And the church was now His house. *J. M. Stifler, Introduction to the Study of the Acts.*

10. *And she gave up the ghost.* In the market-place of the town of Devizes, in England, there is a tablet which records that near to the spot on which it is fixed a woman dropped down dead, having just uttered the words, "If I have the half-crown, may God strike me dead!" and the coin was found firmly fixed in her hand. Now, there was nothing in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira which requires vindication more than there was in that. God's hand was in both alike, and that to the sincerely pious heart is enough. *William M. Taylor, Peter, the Apostle.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

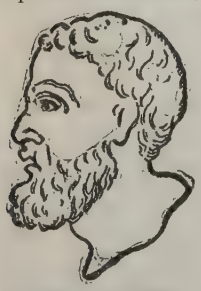
32. *They had all things common.* Settled on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, and living in scattered communities throughout Palestine at this time, were the Essenes, a sect that had literally all things common. Each one deposited whatever he possessed in a general treasury, of which several managers took charge, supplying from it the needs of all. In Egypt there was a Jewish sect called the Therapeutai whose members gave away all their possessions when they joined the order, and there was among them no distinction of rich or poor. Among the early Christians at Jerusalem the giving up of one's possessions was voluntary. Property was sold and the money placed at the disposal of the apostles only as some rich and generous member saw there was need.

36. *Joseph, who was surnamed Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation.* In oriental lands people are often given names with a meaning by their associates. A missionary in China says that one man whom he knows is always called "Old Wait-a-bit" because of his habit of procrastination; another is known as "Angry Face," and three members of one family are known as "Bath-every-day-man," "Bath-once-a-week-man," and "Never-bath-at-all-man."

5. *They carried him out and buried him.* Because the body begins to decay soon after death in the warm climate, and because of the Mosaic law concerning defilement arising from contact with a dead body (Num. 19.11), it has always been the common custom among the Jews in Palestine to bury the dead on the day of death. Ordinarily soon after death the body is washed, wrapped in spices and cloth, and wound round and round with bandages. Ananias probably was wrapped in his own outer garment, and carried on an open bier and placed in a niche in a cave, the customary place of burial.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When Peter and John were released by the Sanhedrin after their first arrest, they went at once to the meeting-place of the company of believers, and reported the threats that had been given with the order not to teach or preach in the name of Jesus. All realized the seriousness of the situation. Together they repeated the second Psalm, which they recognized as a prophecy fulfilled in them, and then they appealed to God to help them to do what they had told the Great Council they should do, speak His word with boldness. The answer to their prayer came in a sign: the place where they were was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.



HEAD OF PETER
From a Medallion found in the Catacombs of Rome

The apostles have been guilty of "contempt of court." They have renounced their allegiance to the great Jewish tribunal, and have become an independent church, responsible only to their heavenly Leader.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of the lesson is Jerusalem. It was probably at the regular meeting-place of the church that Ananias and Sapphira met their fate. Cyprus, men-

tioned as the native home of Barnabas, is an island in the eastern Mediterranean.

Coin of Cyprus, the Home of Barnabas. Head and Title of Claudius Cæsar

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A young orphaned girl who was very rich was greatly troubled on hearing it said that the rich owe their money to the poor. "Why do I owe my money to the poor?" she asked: "Why should I not spend it for myself if I choose? My money came to me and it was meant for me, not for the poor." A friend interested her in a summer country home for poor little children, and when she had learned what joy there is in caring for others she exclaimed: "O, it is true after all, I do owe my money to the poor, I who have so much am only given it in trust for those who have so little." The men and women at Jerusalem who believed in Jesus Christ and who listened to the teaching of the apostles were most of them poor, but no one was allowed to suffer, for those who had possessions believed that it was their duty to help care for those who had none. When they sold a piece of land or a house, to whom did they bring all the money?

For Older Pupils. After the ascension of their Lord how large a company of apostles and disciples met in the upper-room to await the promised sending of the Holy Spirit? After the wonderful day of Pentecost and Peter's great sermon, how many others became members of this Christian community? (3,000.) After the healing of the lame man and Peter's discourse in Solomon's Porch many more believed in Jesus as the Christ; what was then the total number of the believers? (5,000.) "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul." But as sin entered the Garden of Eden, so did sin enter this paradise of peace and unity. Before recording this sin of hypocrisy Luke first records in contrast to it an example of sincerity. What was it?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Desire of Approbation

The Motive Underlying the Sin of Ananias. The deed of Ananias and Sapphira was prompted by the love of praise. While the land remained it remained their own, and after it was sold, it was in their power, as Peter told them. They were in no way compelled to part with it, but such sacrifices as that of Barnabas no doubt received the approbation of the rest and led those two to covet the same applause. They held back a part of the money received for the land and gave the remainder as though it were their all. They wished to gain the good opinion of the others, to establish a reputation for generosity, benevolence, and self-sacrifice, but they would not pay the cost and give as Barnabas gave. They were hypocrites, and the motive back of their hypocrisy was like that of the hypocrites whom Jesus condemned so scathingly. Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men to be seen of them, said He; else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

Right and Wrong Desire of Approbation. "The greatest pleasure I know is to do a good deed by stealth, and to have it found out by accident," said Charles Lamb. He would not sound a trumpet before his good deed, but he wanted it found out nevertheless. It is very natural to wish to have our good deeds known and applauded. "Glory is sweet when our heart says to us that the wreath of honor ought to grace our head," rightly said one of Germany's most eloquent preachers.

The distinction between the right and the wrong desire of praise is well shown in the lives of Edwin and Wilkes Booth. Both brothers inherited great

beauty, pleasing voice, wonderful talent for impersonation. Edwin Booth lived an unaffected, kindly life. He valued the applause of the public as a proof of his success as an actor, but he had no desire to court admiration and he sincerely detested flattery.

Wilkes Booth was always desirous of showing off, of making himself the center of admiring and flattering companions. He could not live without constant praise. His cowardly assassination of President Lincoln was planned in the belief that Lincoln was a tyrant and to kill him was a deed of glory. Edwin Booth will always be known and honored; Wilkes Booth is famed as a monster of depravity.

The Harm of Flattery. The editor of a magazine at an evening reception pointed out to a friend a young man whose vanity and affectation made him ridiculous to every one. "There," he said, "is the victim of one successful poem and its admirers. When he was twenty he wrote some verses which hit the popular fancy. His friends pronounced them a perfect lyric, and publicly announced the writer as the great poet of the nineteenth century. The man has never been able to equal it since. He gave up his profession, and devoted his whole time to scribbling poetry. He is arrogant, vain, worthless. His life is ruined by ill-judged praise."

"Praise," says an old writer, "is like the powerful drug, hellebore. A drop given by a wise mediciner instils strength into the weak. But too much inflames the blood and maddens the brain."

Many a modest, sensible school-girl through the flattery of her companions or boy admirers, becomes a silly woman, utterly useless in the world's work, for which her better qualities would fit her. *Youth's Companion.*

Doing without Praise. Praise is good. To be applauded by our fellow-men, to hear our ambitions about ourselves caught up by their testifying cheers, to have our own best hopes for our own lives confirmed by their appreciation of us, that is a true delight for any man. To be able to do without men's praise because we do not feel its value, because morosely and selfishly we do not care what men think, that is bad; that is a sign of feebleness and conceit. To feel it is wretched, and to affect to feel it is detestable. But to be able to do without men's praise because that which they praise stands for is dearer to us than the praise is, and it so happens that we can not have both of them, that is a wholly different thing. The first man has sunk below the necessity of men's applause, and the second man has risen above it. The poor demoralized beggar and the calm, philosophic servant of God, standing together in the street, neither of them may care much whether men praise or blame him,—both of them can do without applause. But how different they are! Both can do without the sunlight; but one is the mole crawling out of sight of the sun underground, the other is the angel who lives beyond the sun with God. For men's praise stands for goodness. *Phillips Brooks.*

II Genuine Truthfulness

The Baseness of the Sin of Ananias and Sapphira. Ananias sought temporary fame, the reputation among his fellowmen for self-sacrificing generosity; but he attained unending fame, the reputation among all people of all times for base falseness. His very name has become synonymous with liar. The untruthfulness of others is recorded in the Bible, but Ananias and Sapphira are the pre-eminent types of the liar. Why? Are you tempted to say that Ananias spoke not a word, that when Sapphira said they had sold the land for so much, her answer was partly true, for they had sold the land for so much and more? Do you hold that there are white and black lies, and the lie of Ananias and Sapphira could be called a white one?

Peter lied three times when he denied his Lord; Ananias and Sapphira lied only once. But to Peter the temptation to lie came suddenly and he yielded. Afterwards he repented most sincerely.

Ananias and Sapphira lied with deliberation. They were thorough hypocrites. Together they planned to retain a part of the price and pretend to give away the whole, and had their plan succeeded, had their deceit never been found out, they would not have repented like Peter, they would rather have congratu-

lated themselves on having been so shrewd. The lie only showed how thoroughly false they were at heart. Then, too, they presented the money as a sacred offering, and their lie was also a sacrilege, they "lied not unto men, but unto God."

Peter's lie was prompted by a desire to shield himself; their lie was prompted by a desire to gain what was not rightly theirs, credit which their avarice would not let them deserve. Were not the motive and the manner of their lie far more heinous than Peter's? A lie is always a lie and always wrong, whatever its motive or manner or magnitude, but some lies are baser than others, and among the basest of lies is Ananias' and Sapphira's.

A Lie may be acted, not spoken. In Tennyson's poem, Morte D'Arthur, King Arthur bids Sir Belvidere take Excalibur, his royal sword, and fling it far into the lake: the sword had been given him by a mysterious white arm uplifted from the sea, it had been his pride, and now that he is dying he would have it returned whence it came. The knight hastens away as if to fulfil the command, but he is unwilling to throw away the wonderful sword, he covets it for himself. On reaching the lake he draws it forth and gazes at its bejewelled haft:

> "He gazed so long
> That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
> This way and that dividing the swift mind,
> In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
> Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
> There in the many-knotted waterflags."

He returns to the wounded king, who asks him if he has carried out his mission, and what he has seen or heard. Sir Belvidere does not say in so many words that he has performed his deed, but he answers:

> "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
> And the wild water lapping on the crag."

The king sees his deceit and cries out:

> "Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
> Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
> Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
> This is a shameful thing for men to lie."

Like Sir Belvidere's lie is the lie of Ananias, an intentional lie expressed not in words.

The Harm of White Lies. "Chinese" Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, went to India in 1886 with the Viceroy of that country as his private secretary. Soon after they landed, the Viceroy received a bulky pamphlet from a local magnate. Wishing to conciliate this magnate, Lord Ripon asked his secretary to write him and say that the Viceroy was greatly indebted to him for the pamphlet, which he had read with the greatest interest. Gordon pointed out that the paper of the pamphlet had not been cut, and he could not therefore say that it had been read with the greatest interest. Lord Ripon is a Christian of high integrity; he argued that it was manifestly impossible to read all the voluminous printed matter sent to him, and that his words were a mere figure of speech. Gordon declared that he could not reconcile his conscience to stating that the Governor General had read and enjoyed the pamphlet, and he resigned his appointment and sailed for China on the next steamer.

How far may we go in using words we do not mean because they are "figures of speech"? Where does the black lie end and the white lie begin? Is strict veracity possible in business and social life?

It is a fatal mistake to tell what some call the light lies. They may harm no one else, but they must inevitably harm the one who utters them. One can not afford to indulge in them because of their effect on his own character. Insensibly the conscience becomes less true and the moral sense less keen. White lies told make the pathway easy for the black ones to follow. Well does Kant classify truthfulness among the duties to self. Falsehood he places on the

same level with suicide: suicide is the taking of the physical life, falsehood the destruction of the moral life.

Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah.
But they that deal truly are his delight.

The only way to deal truly is to follow the command laid down in Exodus—Keep thee far from a false matter.

The Peril. In a goldsmith's window in one of our cities may be read this notice, "Artificial gems set in real gold." This advertisement expresses one of the most serious perils of human life—the close and confusing association of truth and error, good and evil, godliness and hypocrisy.

During the past year or two there has been an extraordinary crop of Alpine accidents, and in several instances these arose from a disregard of the danger of a grass slope. The inexperienced mountaineer thinks that a grass slope must be safe, and, setting his foot on the inviting green, discovers that it is every bit as dangerous as the ice, if it be steep and terminate in a precipice. The short Alpine grass is remarkably slippery, and many a tourist who had safely negotiated rock and glacier has fallen a victim to the treacherous slope where the verdant patch and mountain flower tempt the climber. We are comparatively safe when a thing is nakedly evil and the situation confessedly dangerous, but the pure gold reconciles us to the spurious gem, and the green slope, with an edelweiss at the top and a precipice at the bottom lures us to our doom. *William L. Watkinson,* in *The Duty of Imperial Thinking.*

Good Counsel. It seems to me that the shortest way to check the darker forms of deceit is to set watch more scrupulous against those which have mingled, unregarded and unchastised, with the current of our life. Do not let us lie at all. Do not think of one falsity as harmless and another as slight and another as unintended. Cast them all aside; they may be light and accidental, but they are an ugly soot from the smoke of the pit, for all that; and it is better that our heart should be swept clean of them, without overcare as to which is largest or blackest. Speaking truth is like writing fair, and comes only by practice; it is less a matter of will than of habit, and I doubt if any occasion can be trivial which permits the practice and formation of such a habit. *John Ruskin.*

III Missionary Topic An Example

Necessary Lessons. We should not think of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira as merely a personal matter, one in which they alone were concerned. It was probably before the assembled church that Ananias laid down a part of his money as though it were his all, and that Sapphira answered Peter's question by a lie. Such hypocrisy in such a place could not go unpunished. The believers were living in perfect accord with one another, and in wonderful consciousness of the presence with them of the Holy Spirit. Such a life could not long be maintained if a spirit of pretence, hypocrisy, covetousness of money and of undeserved credit, gained a firm place among them. All the preaching of the apostles, however true and impressive, would not have convinced others of the truth had their lives not shown that they followed their own teaching. Every believer had his part to bear in the upbuilding of God's kingdom. People like Ananias and Sapphira could have done incalculable harm. Their deaths came as a warning to all. The result was that "great fear came upon the whole church;" the worthy were encouraged, and the unworthy were driven away.

When the city of Jericho was captured by Joshua, the command was that all the silver and gold and brass and iron found should be consecrated to Jehovah and brought into the treasury. Achan disobeyed. When the sin was traced to him he confessed that he had coveted a goodly Babylonish garment and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, and had hid them in the earth in the midst of his tent. "The Lord shall trouble thee this day," was Joshua's verdict, and they stoned him with stones and burned him with fire. His punishment, like the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, who "offered strange fire which the Lord commanded not," and of Uzza, who touched

the ark on its way from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem, and of Ananias and Sapphira, was given as a lesson to all the people.

Some Examples. We shall be frank about it—we shall say that we are carrying things with a high hand in Korea. We have gone over into the back-yard of our neighbor, and are telling him to kindly move on—simply because we need his home. We are doing this just as the Americans have done to the Indians, the rightful owners of America; just as the British have done to the Hindus; just as the Russians have done to the Tartars and the Chinese; as Germany in Africa and Kiau Chau, and France in Cochin China and northern Africa have done. Nippon has joined the household of great powers; she has become civilized. *A Japanese Writer* in *The Review of Reviews.*

By their Fruits ye shall know them. An educated Japanese read the Bible carefully and thoughtfully, but could not make up his mind to accept its teachings. It was all right in theory, he said, but he wished to see it put in practice. On a train one day a Japanese woman was pointed out to him as a Christian, and he decided to watch her throughout the journey, and see if she lived up to her Bible. "If I can see anything in her conduct like this book, I will believe it," he declared. She little realized that her every word and deed were being subjected to such scrutiny, but by little acts of unselfishness and of thoughtfulness for others, she let her light shine. He saw that she was a consistent Christian, and determined to make the Bible the guide of his own conduct.

Said a Chinese Mandarin to a missionary who went to a new field of labor: "I have not yet heard your teachings, but I have seen them, I have a servant, who was a very devil, but since he has been following your teachings, he has become another man. I am glad to have you come and teach my people."

King Mutesa of Uganda had learned about the Mohammedan religion from the Arab traders who visited his country. Then Stanley spent several months in Uganda, and at the king's request told him about the Christian religion. When Stanley was about to leave, King Mutesa called a council of his chiefs and announced that he would follow the Christian's Book. The reason he gave was this, as told in "Uganda's White Man of Work": "I want what is best, I want the true book; but the Katikiro (prime minister) asks, 'How are we to know which is true?' Listen. The Arabs and the white men behave exactly as they are taught in their books, do they not? The Arabs come here for ivory and slaves, and we have seen that they do not always speak the truth, and that they buy men of their own color and treat them badly, putting them in chains and beating them. The white men, when offered slaves, refuse them, saying, 'Shall we have our brothers slaves? No; we are all sons of God.' I have not heard a white man tell a lie yet. Speke came here, behaved well, and went his way home with his brother Grant. Stamlee (Stanley) came here, and he would take no slaves. When I think that the Arabs and the white men do as they are taught, I say that the white men are superior to the Arabs, and I think, therefore, that their book must be better than Mohammed's, and of all that Stamlee has read from this book I see nothing too hard for me to believe."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Truthfulness is better than the truth. *Phillips Brooks.*

A lie that is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies. *Tennyson.*

One of the sublimest things in the world is plain truth. *Bulwer Lytton.*

Of all the evil spirits abroad at this hour of the world, insincerity is the most dangerous. *J. A. Froude.*

Point thy tongue on the anvil of truth. *Pindar.*

He that doeth alms in secret is greater than our master Moses himself. *Jewish Saying.*

The only safety for a man who desires to appear good is to be good. *Lyman J. Gage.*

You will never habitually speak the truth if you aim only to speak it; you must aim to live it. *David Gregg.*

Words are like money, some are genuine, and some are counterfeit; if a man

had a bag of counterfeit money and kept passing it, in a little while nobody would take his money. *Irving Bacheller.*

Our mission is not to justify the ways of God to men, but to rectify the ways of men to God. *W. H. P. Faunce.*

Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Luke 12.1.

The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after having been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 1 Tim. 6.10.

Against thee, thee only have I sinned
And done that which is evil in thy sight. Psa. 51.4.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

After Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, He said to them: "I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." He meant, not that they should go about washing one another's feet, but that they should be willing and ready to serve instead of being served. In the life of the apostolic church many events are recorded whose example for us lies in the spirit of the deed, rather than in the actual thing done. There is no reason for our imitating the example of those who sold all they possessed and gave the entire proceeds for the common use of all, but we should cultivate the spirit that prompted such deeds—the spirit of unity and generosity and brotherly kindness.

In a town in India, a British agent decided to shade the native shops by planting some peepul trees, but when the shopkeepers learned of his intention they declared they would move. The peepul tree is considered sacred by the Hindoos. "We cannot tell untruths or swear falsely under a peepul tree," they said, and naively added, "and how can we carry on business otherwise?" When Peter asked Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" and when he asked Sapphira, "How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord?" he impressed the truth that God's presence overshadowed them always, and they had not sinned against men but against God. Are we so conscious of God's presence that we can not tell untruths at any time, for they would seem to us untruths told to God?

Have I so true a sense of what is right in God's sight that I am not tempted to act an untruth or to tell a "white lie"?

Like Paul, I will be debtor both to the wise and the foolish; I will learn from the foolish ones in this lesson not to covet undeserved credit.

It may be said of Ananias, "the voice, indeed, is Jacob's voice; but the hands are those of Esau;" can this be said of me?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The early Christian community at Jerusalem fulfilled Christ's command to love one's neighbor as one's self. Though consisting at this time of five thousand people, they lived in perfect peace and unity; the rich shared their possessions with the poor, and no one lacked. Not only did all the disciples live in brotherly love and do their duty to the full, but the apostles, whose duty it was to bear witness to the truth of Christ's resurrection, taught with great power, and with them all, disciples and apostles, was the favor of God.

Among the richer disciples who sold their lands or houses and gave all the money received for them to the apostles for them to distribute to those who were in need, was Joseph, a Jew of the tribe of Levi and a native of the island of Cyprus. The apostles called him Barnabas, which means "Son of Exhortation," for he afterwards became very helpful in the work of the church, in exhorting and consoling the people.

Two others, Ananias and his wife Sapphira, wished to emulate Barnabas and receive as much praise and gratitude as he, no doubt, had received for his self-sacrificing generosity. They sold a possession, but could not bring themselves to part with all the money they received. A part only they brought to the apostles as if it were their all. Instead of the honor and praise he expected,

Ananias was met with stern words from Peter, who knew of the deceit. The land was his own to do with as he would, Peter told him; there was no need of his parting with it, and after he had sold it, he could have kept the entire sum, but Satan had filled his heart to practise this deceit, and he had lied, not to men, but to God, whose presence was always with them. On hearing these words Ananias fell down dead. Young men arose, wrapped him in a mantle, carried him out, and buried him.

Three hours later Sapphira, all unknowing of the fate that had befallen her husband, came in, and Peter asked her if she had sold the land for such a sum. "Yes," she answered, "for that sum," and then Peter charged her with having agreed with Ananias to put the Spirit of the Lord to a test in an attempt to deceive Him. Just then the returning steps of the young men were heard at the door and Peter told Sapphira that they should carry her out and bury her as they had her husband. She, too, fell down dead, and Peter's words were fulfilled.

Great fear fell on all the people because of this judgment of God on sin. The presence of God with the church was believed and insincere people feared to join them, but the number of true believers increased continually.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Christianity and Communism. A company on board a German steamer were discussing political questions. One man sat aloof from the rest and took no part in the heated argument. "What are you?" questioned one of the others, and he replied "I am a Socialist." "Then we are brothers, for I am one, too," exclaimed the questioner. "But I must explain further," returned the man quietly, "I recognize two sorts of Socialists, and I would like to know, before acknowledging brotherhood with you, which sort you are. There were Socialists even in the time of the apostles, for we read that "they brought their possessions"; but now there is also another kind of Socialist of whom it may be said, "they would take their possessions away from the rich." I am a Socialist of the first sort; what are you? See chapter III of "Christianity and Social Problems," by Dr. Lyman Abbott.

2. The present day problem. Do we need to be hypocrites? See "The Praise of Hypocrisy," by Professor G. T. Knight; "A Lie Never Justifiable," by H. Clay Trumbull; or "The Age of Pretence," by Basil Tozer, in the *Monthly Review* for Aug., 1906.

3. "Law honesty." There are men who do not divide actions merely into those that are honest and those that are not, but create a third sub-division, that of "law honesty," or that kind of honesty which consists in keeping clear of the penitentiary. *Theodore Roosevelt.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What was the belief of the Sadducees? 2. Tell the story of the two arrests of the apostles within a few hours. (Acts 5.17-27.) 3. When before this had the rulers been afraid to do what they wished because of the people? (Luke 19.47; 22.2.) 4. How had the people changed in their attitude toward Jesus? (Luke 23.13-25.) 5. Did the people change in their attitude toward the apostles? (Compare their treatment of Paul, Acts 21.30-36.) 6. What was the charge against Peter and John the first time they were arrested? (Acts 4.7.) 7. What were the charges against the apostles in the second arrest? (Acts 5.28.) 8. What had Peter said that led the council to say the apostles intended to make them answer for the death of Jesus, verse 28? (Acts 2.36; 5.13-15; 4.10; 5.30.) 9. When had the people said that they were willing to be made answerable for His death? (Mark 27.25.) 10. How did Peter's speech affect the Sadducees? (Verse 33.) What did they do? (Verse 40.) 11. What was Gamaliel's counsel in regard to the apostles? (Acts 5.33-39.) 12. What was the effect of the persecution on the apostles? (Verses 40, 42.) 13. Tell the story of the three young men who refused to obep Nebuchadnezzar in a command that was contrary to the command of God. (Dan. 3.8-30.) 14. What words of theirs mean "We must obey God rather than men"? (16-18.)

LESSON VII—FEBRUARY 14

THE APOSTLES IMPRISONED

Read Acts 5.17-42. Commit verses 19, 20.

Golden Text

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 5.10.

LESSON TEXT Acts 5.17-32

17 But the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy, 18 and laid hands on the apostles, and put them in public ward. 19 But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, 20 Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this Life. 21 And when they heard *this,* they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought. 22 But the officers that came found them not in the prison; and they returned, and told, 23 saying, The prison-house we found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them whereunto this would grow. 25 And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people. 26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, *but* without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. 31 Him did God exalt with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. 32 And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

17. *The high priest.* Perhaps the nominal high priest, Caiaphas, but more probably Annas.—*With him.* With him in his jealousy of the Christians. See Song of Solomon, 8.6.

18. *The apostles.* Apparently all of them.—*In public ward.* See Acts 4.3.

19. *An angel.* An angel is mentioned five times in the Acts: 5.19; 7.30 and 38; 8.26; 12.7-10; 22.33.

20. *All the words of this life.* The words of Jesus, the Prince of Life. See lesson IV, verse 15.

21. *The high priest came.* Into the council-chamber.—*The council...and all the senate of the children of Israel.* "These two expressions apparently represent the same court (the Sanhedrin: see verses 27, 34), the latter being used as a solemn Old Testament phrase (compare Ex. 4.29) to call attention (Acts 25.15) to the importance of the occasion" (*Bartlet*).

22. *Told the officers.* Of the Levitical guard, who followed the orders of the high priest.

24. *The captain of the temple.* The chief of the temple guard. See Luke 22.4.

27. *When they had brought them.* When the officers had brought the apostles to the council-chamber.

28. *This name.* They avoid mentioning the name of Jesus.—*Ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.* A remarkable admission from an enemy.—*Intend to bring this man's blood upon us.* Make us answer for the death of Jesus. Peter had frequently accused the rulers of having crucified Jesus. See their own words in Matt. 27.25.

29. *We must.* "Parallel is Socrates' declaration in his defense, 'Men of Athens, I honor and love you, but I shall obey God rather than you'" (*Abbott*).

30. *Hanging him on a tree.* "The cross is here designedly so called, because, according to Jewish law, being hanged on a tree (Gal. 3.13) was esteemed an accursed death" (*Gloag*). See Deut. 21.23.

31. *A prince.* A kingly leader.—*Repentance.* See Luke 24.47.

32. *These things.* The crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension are probably meant, though some scholars refer the words to the teachings of Jesus.—*Spirit.* "The Holy Spirit taught them the divine meaning of what they knew, and confirmed their witness by signs. See John 15.26, 27" (*Lindsay*).

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

17. *The sect of the Sadducees.* The Jews who returned to Palestine after the captivity were not in the position of an independent nation. They were the subjects of Persian, and then of Greek domination. The Sadducees were the Jewish, or rather the sacerdotal, aristocracy; for the priest-nobles were the only aristocracy left to the people. In time of foreign domination their aim was selfishly to maintain their places of power, and their right to divide among themselves the temple-dues, the great source of wealth in Palestine. In times of independence, their primary idea was conservatism. They aimed at preserving the temple service and the written regulations of the law of Moses. They seemed to teach a cold Epicuranism which limited man's existence to this present life, and denied a resurrection, a future retribution. They had been peculiarly active in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, and they must have been irritated beyond measure when they found that a disciple company still survived and were preaching that Jesus was the Christ, appealing to that resurrection which they in theory denied. *Thomas M. Lindsay, Acts of Apostles.*

19. *An angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors.* How? we ask, and who is the angel of the Lord? The word *angel* simply means *messenger*, and in the Old Testament we can distinguish three uses of this expression: (a) the Angel of Jehovah is really a manifestation of Jehovah Himself; (b) the angel is a messenger of Himself; (c) the messenger is often an impersonal agent of the divine working; that is, the angel of the Lord is a Hebrew description of what we should call the action of divine providence, whether in punishing, as when the angel smites Israel with pestilence, or in delivering, as when the angel stops the mouths of the lions from hurting Daniel. In the Acts we find the same uses. Stephen speaks of a theophany (a). The angel who liberates Peter appears as a messenger in human form (b). The angel who smites Herod is simply the messenger of death; there is no appearance (c). The guidance of Philip seems to imply an inward intuition rather than an external vision. In this deliverance of the apostles we note the bareness of the statement, very different from the circumstantial account of the deliverance of Peter. Nor does any stress seem to be laid upon the incident: neither the apostles nor Gamaliel allude to it, and yet the indisputable appearance of an angel should have had some weight with the Sanhedrin. So we may take it in the third sense, *i. e.* as the Hebraic expression for some divine intervention, the manner of which is not defined. *R. B. Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles.*

17. *An angel.* Upon one occasion John Bunyan having been permitted to go out and visit his family, with whom he intended to spend the night, felt so uneasy that at a very late hour he went back to prison. Information was given to a neighboring clerical magistrate that there was strong suspicion of Bunyan having broken prison. At midnight he sent a messenger to the jail, that he might be a witness against the merciful keeper. On his arrival he demanded, "Are all the prisoners safe?" The answer was "Yes." "Is John Bunyan safe?"

"Yes." "Let me see him." He was called up and confronted with the astonished witness, and all passed off well. His kind-hearted jailer said to him, "You may go out when you will, for you know much better when to return than I can tell you." We do not call that a miracle, yet who shall dare to say that an angel had nothing to do with it? *William M. Taylor,* in *Peter, the Apostle.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

21. *They entered into the temple about daybreak and taught.* The people of Palestine have always begun the day much earlier than is customary with us. During most of the year the heat is so great that work is begun very early, and a long rest is taken when the sun is highest in the heavens. The temple gates were opened early for those who came to worship and those who came to trade (John 2.14). "To-day worship is often carried on in the synagogues at Jerusalem before the sun appears above Mount Olivet."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Several years, probably, have now passed since Pentecost. Many miracles have been wrought through the hands of the apostles, and great numbers of the people have believed them "signs" from heaven. Popular enthusiasm has grown from day to day; faith in the apostles' power has become so great that the people even believe that Peter's shadow falling on the sick in the streets will have healing virtue. People beyond Jerusalem have heard the news, and have come to the city with the sick and demon-possessed. The rulers are now thoroughly aroused. Before this they have arrested and threatened the leaders, Peter and John; now they are bent on severer measures.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The prison in which the apostles were placed was probably a room within the temple enclosure. The apostles when freed went into the outer court and there taught the people. The Sanhedrin had formerly held its meetings in a hall within the temple enclosure, but at this time their council chamber was without the walls, and to this hall the apostles were brought.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Have any of you ever been at the seashore? Have you ever been there after a storm? You know that after a storm the waves rush ever so much farther up on to the beach, and sometimes when the storm has been long and severe the waves come with such force that they do great damage. Once when the waves were sweeping inland and tearing houses from their foundations which had been built where it was supposed the water never could reach, an old lady was seen standing at her door and wringing a mop—she was trying to keep out the Atlantic Ocean! What a picture she made of useless effort in the face of an overwhelming tide! We have another such a picture to-day. Instead of the old lady there are the great and powerful Jewish rulers, instead of her mop there are scourges—rods, or whips made of cords or leather—with which they have ordered some men beaten, and instead of the Atlantic Ocean there is the onward rushing tide of Christ's influence and power. These Jewish rulers think that by badly treating the apostles they will silence them, and put an end to the growth of Christ's church, but we shall see that they might just as well have tried to stop the onward rush of the mighty Atlantic.

For Older Pupils. John concludes his Gospel by saying, "There are also many other things which Jesus did the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." A somewhat similar ending might have been written in regard to the Acts of the Apostles. Our Book of Acts records only a few of the deeds done and persecutions suffered by the apostles. And yet we have to-

day an account of a persecution which seems very similar to the one we had two weeks ago. In "the Trial of Peter and John" the two apostles were arrested by the Sanhedrin, put in prison over night, tried the next morning, and released after they had boldly said to their rulers, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." In our lesson to-day, the apostles are again imprisoned over night by the Sanhedrin, tried the next morning and released after Peter has proclaimed, "We must obey God rather than men." The details of the two imprisonments differ greatly. The main facts are essentially the same. Why does Luke, since he must needs omit so much, give us both of these accounts? Because he is showing the growth of the oposition and its effect on the church. In the first imprisonment the rulers were "troubled" by what they heard of the work of the apostles, now they are "filled with jealousy" and their opposition is far more intense and bitter. What other differences in the two accounts show the changed situation? (The arrest is more public, all the apostles are imprisoned, punishment is inflicted, the apostles are more determined and independent, more divinely encouraged, and the policy of the Pharisees, as framed by Gamaliel, is narrated.)

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Jealousy

Examples of Jealousy. It was jealousy, we are told, that led the high priest and the Sadducees to put the apostles in prison. Because of the many "signs" wrought by the apostles among the people, the multitude brought their sick to them from the cities round about. The rulers saw the crowds and heard of the cures, and were jealous of the power the apostles were gaining. They looked upon them as their rivals, and feared they would lose their own authority over the people.

Beginning with Cain who killed Abel because he was jealous of him, there are many instances of jealousy recorded in the Bible. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery because he was their father's favorite and they were jealous. King Saul's jealousy of David began when the women sang their refrain which ascribed to David greater victory than to him. "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me have they ascribed but thousands; and what can he have more but the kingdom?" he thought, and from that day he "eyed David," looked at him jealously and suspiciously. You remember how many of our last year's lessons hinged upon this mad jealousy of Saul's.

The elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son is the New Testament picture of jealousy. He comes home at night from his hard day's labor, hears music and dancing, and learns that his brother has returned and been gladly welcomed by his father, who has had the fatted calf killed for him. He refuses to go in and greet his brother, and angrily tells his father that he himself has been with him "these many years," and yet he had never given him a kid with which to make merry with his friends. "All that I have is thine," his father reminds him, but still the angry, jealous feeling rankles, for he regards the rejoicing over his brother's return as a stab at himself, as if the showing of favor to his brother deprived him of what he coveted for himself.

Some who might have been Jealous. Joshua, Moses' minister, was jealous for his leader's power when he learned that Eldad Medad had been prophesying in the camp, and he asked Moses to forbid this, but Moses nobly replied, "Art thou jealous for my sake? Would that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put his spirit upon them."

Saul did everything in his power to make his son Jonathan jealous of David, but there was no jealousy in the latter's noble soul. Saul told him that "as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, he (Jonathan) should not be established, nor his kingdom," but Jonathan told his father that he was content to have David king and be himself next unto him.

When his disciples sought to arouse the jealousy of John the Baptist, because the people were flocking to hear Jesus, they could not. John replied to them,

"Ye yourselves hear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but, that I am sent before him."

A Picture of Humanity. The hospital ward stretches out in silence, with its two rows of white-curtained beds. The patients are not of the common run, but incurables, who will never leave their beds but to be laid at rest in the cemetery. Community of suffering is often the beginning of brotherliness—it is so natural that it should be; but that has not been the case in this abode of pain where I would have you turn your eyes for a moment. The people vegetating here show a deplorable disposition toward one another; some breath of discord seems to have blown over them: harsh words are exchanged and jealousies are rife; they do each other ill turns with their nurses and their visitors; each seems to fancy that the care and attention given his neighbour is a curtailment of his own, and a dumb warfare goes on with miserable weapons, a warfare of weakness against weakness.

Poor fools, whom such misfortune as yours has not taught to be pitiful to one another, you are a picture of humanity. Men, overcome by suffering and burdens, and all the time occupied with doing one another harm, or in striving to be first—what are they but incurables, quarreling at the threshold of death? *Charles Wagner,* in *Justice.*

How to overcome Jealousy. Envy and hate and malice of all sorts are not to be disposed of by argument and repression. They can only be swept out of the heart by love. The only way to do with excellence of any kind is to love it, be glad and proud of it, appreciate it as if it were part of your own possession, and it is if you do this. Hate makes a circle of contagion and infects everything; and love, too, makes a blessed circle till we see nothing but love, think nothing but love, feel nothing but love. Where is the mystic center of that circle of light? At the center of that circle, whose circumference is the whole universe of God, there stands a cross. At the cross we bow in penitence of self and pity of others. We can not keep our malice there. *Hugh Black,* in *Listening to God.*

II The Supremacy of Divine Authority

The Supreme Duty. The Sanhedrin was the great court of the Jews, its members had power to imprison, to torture, and to excommunicate any one who opposed them. Peter and John had been commanded by this supreme court not to teach in Christ's name. Again they are arrested with their companions and brought before the Sanhedrin and charged with contempt of court; "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us," are the words they hear. They do not deny the charge. What have they to say for themselves? Only this, "We must obey God rather than men." They are ready to endure anything, but they will never disobey the command given them by Christ to be His witnesses. Thus the Jewish council is defied, and the church freed from the dominion of the Sanhedrin. Henceforth the conscience of the believers in Christ, divinely enlightened, is to be their only dictator.

"Condemn me or acquit me, but know this," said Socrates to his accusers, "I shall still say what the Divine bids me say."

When Luther at Worms was commanded by the emperor Charles V and the Pope to recant, he replied: "I can not recant. It is not wise, it is not safe, for a man to do anything against his conscience. Here I stand. I can not do otherwise. God help me!"

Said William H. Seward in the Senate Chamber when the anti-slavery agitation was at its height, "There is a higher law than human constitutions."

It is this belief in a higher law, the sense of the supremacy of divine authority over all human authority, that has sustained countless numbers of Christian heroes since the time when Peter and the apostles boldly proclaimed their intention of obeying God rather than men.

An African Christian. The chief of the Ashanti tribe had forbidden his people to attend the services or listen to any words of the missionary sent among them. One of the men who had become a Christian was called before his chief. "I hear that you have openly renounced your submission to me,"

said his ruler. "No," replied the man, "I know my hands are yours; any work you give me I shall do to the best of my ability. My head lies on the edge of your sword. But my soul is not yours; therefore I have given it to God."

When Man is obeyed rather than God. We are all from time to time placed in circumstances in which we are obliged to choose between obedience to God—loyal conformity to the dictates of conscience—on the one hand, or conformity to inclination, or to self interest, or to self-indulgence, or to the maxims of the business world, or to the corrupt fashions of the hour, or to the customs of society, on the other. In business, says the tempter, a man really must not be so severe in his application of the Christian idea of integrity and truth telling. He must learn to "obey man." He must accept the methods of doing business which custom has sanctioned, although it is true that they can not exactly be reconciled with the conscience, which is forever whispering that to misrepresent the quality of goods is against the law of honesty, and that to take advantage of your neighbor in a business transaction is to sin against God.

Shall a legislator, a congressman, a senator, a public official, follow the multitude to do evil because the party sanctions it, or shall he courageously denounce it, as a God-fearing man? Shall a lawyer, for gold or for glory, use the machinery of justice against his conscience to do his client's will because many of his profession do the same? Shall one who is a member of a great corporation consent to be enriched by an act of tyranny and oppression perpetrated under the forms of law upon a weaker firm? Ah, how often, in these days of keen and conscienceless competition, is it necessary for a Christian man to repel the insidious and specious suggestions of the tempter with the clear, strong, uncompromising declaration, "We ought to obey God rather than men." *Randolph H. McKim,* in *The Treasury.*

III Missionary Topic Persecuted for Righteousness' Sake

The Persecution of the Apostles. So enraged were the members of the Sanhedrin at Peter's courageous words charging them with having put to death the Prince of Life, that they were only prevented by Gamaliel's advice from killing him and others. They ordered the apostles beaten and then let them go, after charging them again not to speak in the name of Jesus. According to the Jewish custom their backs must have been bared and their arms tied to a low pillar so that they stood in a stooping posture while blows from leather thongs rained on their flesh. The number of blows was limited by law to forty, and lest a mistake in counting be made thirty-nine only were given. They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ. They were, as Paul afterwards expressed it, joint-heirs with Christ; if they suffered with Him, they would be also glorified with Him.

Jesus had often warned His disciples of the persecutions they would suffer. "They shall put you out of the synagogues, yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God," He had said, and when the persecutions came it must have been a comfort to them to recall these words of their Lord, "These things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come ye may remember them, how that I told you" (John 16.4). It is believed that Peter and Paul perished in the persecution of Nero which followed the burning of Rome, 64 A. D.

Says Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell, who is doing such a noble work among the poor fisher folk of Labrador: "We can always begin to know that we are doing real service by the blows that we shall begin to receive back again. For the servant is not better than his Master, and must ever expect to taste the flavor of the treatment that was meted out to Him."

The True Spirit. When David Brainerd knew that God had called him to become a missionary to the Indians, he wrote in his journal this prayer of consecration: "Here I am, Lord, send me; send me to the ends of the earth; send me to the rough and savage pagans of the wilderness; send me from all

that is called comfort in the earth; send me even to death itself; if it be but in Thy service, and to promote Thy kingdom."

This has been the spirit of all true missionaries, and it has been the spirit of all their true converts. Readers of the history of mission work in China know well how Chinese Christians have endured persecution. Mr. John R. Mott was told by one of the missionaries in North China that during the Boxer troubles only fifty out of the one thousand Chinese Christians in his mission recanted, and that all but three of the fifty had renewed their allegience to Christ. In a church of over two hundred members belonging to another mission half the number were slain, but only one recanted.

SENTENCE SERMONS

God's angels open locks as easily as His sunbeams open rosebuds. *H. W. Warren.*

It is a great deal easier to do what God gives us to do, than to face the responsibility of not doing it. *J. R. Miller.*

I would rather obey than work miracles. *Martin Luther.*

Oh, fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know erelong,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong. *Longfellow.*

Recoveries from sickness, releases out of troubles, are to be looked upon by us as granted, not that we may enjoy the comforts, but that God may be honored with the services, of our life. *Matthew Henry.*

To him who stands at parting ways,
Whom choice confronts of this or that—
The level path through pleasant days,
The heights the saints are toiling at—
God speed! and may he never rue
The road he chooses of the two. *James Buckham.*
There is no wisdom nor understanding
Nor counsel against Jehovah. Prov. 21.30.

Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. Josh. 24.15.

Jealousy is cruel as Sheol;
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire. Song of Solomon, 8.6.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Let us make our own this prayer of Henry Robinson Palmer:

From bitterness preserve me, Lord;
From jealous thoughts protect my day;
Against the stroke of envy's sword
Help me to hold my way.
And grant my soul sufficient grace
To gladden at another's prize,
And look upon his eager face
With sympathetic eyes.

When we do anything which our conscience forbids, because some one asks us to do it, or because others do it, we are obeying man and disobeying God.

Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God. We repeat this prayer of the psalmist; but do we understand its meaning? Peter and the others were very sure what was the will of God for them, they knew perfectly what they must do in order to obey God. What is the will of God for us? We must not make the mistake of thinking that it is something apart from our daily lives. We are doing God's will when we do the duty that is ours for the day as in His sight.

When Daniel Webster was asked what was the greatest thought that had ever come to him, he replied, "The thought of my personal responsibility before

God." The supremacy of divine authority and the responsibility resting upon us of obeying, is, indeed, the greatest of thoughts.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

"We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard," boldly declared Peter and John when they were released from their first trial before the Sanhedrin. The people flocked to hear their words, and the jealousy and enmity of high priests and Sadducees were aroused. They have the apostles imprisoned, but an angel delivers them at night and directs them to speak in the temple. Early the next morning the members of the Sanhedrin learn that their prisoners have escaped, although the prison is found securely locked and the guards at the doors, and at the same time they are informed that the apostles are standing and preaching in the temple. They are greatly perplexed. What can be done with such defiant men who have an unknown ally to help them out of prison?

The apostles are quietly brought before them. The high priest charges them with disobedience to the command of the Sanhedrin, and with intent to make its members answerable for the death of Jesus. "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching," he exclaims in his wrath. What a fine testimony to the work of the apostles, coming from their bitterest enemy! The secret of their success and the reason for their disobedience of the lawful Jewish authorities Peter announces in one brief, eloquent sentence, "We must obey God rather than men." Then, strong in the consciousness of the presence of God, he calmly adds that the apostles and the Holy Spirit are witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus whom they, His enemies, had slain.

No wonder the authorities are angry enough to kill Peter and the rest. But there is one cool person there, a learned doctor of the law named Gamaliel, who has the prisoners removed and then calms the excited members by reminding them of others who had "given themselves out to be somebody"—Theudas and Judas of Galilee—but whose claims had come to naught. He advises that these men be let alone, for if they are impostors their work will be overthrown, but if they are divinely commissioned, then the authorities will be fighting against God. The Sanhedrin listen to Gamaliel. The apostles are freed after being beaten and again charged not to speak in the name of Jesus. They depart rejoicing that they are counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name, and every day, in the temple and at home, they cease not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ.

SUBJECT FOR BIBLE DISCUSSION

Gamaliel's advice. See Vol. II of Sermons by Dr. Timothy Dwight, page 216.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What is told us about Stephen's character in the 6th and 7th chapters of Acts? (6.3, 5, 8, 10, 15; 7.55, 56, 59, 60.) 2. Could there have been a partial truth in the charges against Stephen? 3. What was the charge made against Jesus in His trial before the Sanhedrin? (Matt. 59.61.) 4. Read Stephen's speech carefully. What did he show by his recital of the history of Israel? 5. What part especially angered the Pharisees? (47-50.) 6. Make an outline of Stephen's speech. 7. What was said about the face of Jesus at His transfiguration? (Matt. 17.2.) 8. When had Jesus said that He would be seen seated at the right hand of God? (Luke 22.69.) 9. Why was the stoning of Stephen unlawful? (John 18.31). 10. Contrast with Stephen's words of forgiveness, the dying prayer of the Old Testament martyr Zechariah, who was stoned. (2 Chron. 24.22.) 11. When had Jesus spoken of death as sleep? (John 11.11.) 12. What was the effect of Stephen's death? (Acts 8.1-4.) 13. To the carrying out of what part of Jesus' commission to His disciples did it lead? (Acts 1.8.) 14. Which is worse, to do wrong yourself, or to approve of the wrong doing of others? 15. What did Paul say about his persecutions of the Christians in Acts 26.9-11?

LESSON VIII—FEBRUARY 21

STEPHEN THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR

Read Acts 6.1-8.3. Commit verses 7.55, 56.

Golden Text

They stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Acts 7.59.

LESSON TEXT Acts 6.8-15; 7:54-8.3

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. 9 But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. 11 Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God. 12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council, 13 and set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: 14 for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. 15 And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

54 And when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *the Lord,* and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. 1 And Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *Signs.* *Sign* rather than *miracle,* the word used in John's Gospel.

9. Probably five synagogues are here meant, though some scholars divide the members into three geographical groups—(1) Rome, (2) Northern Africa, and (3) Asia Minor—and others assume but two synagogues.

10. *Withstand.* Compare the promise made in Luk. 21.15.

10. *Withstand.* Compare the promise made in Luke 21.15.

13 and 14. Blasphemous words are words spoken against God, or words which claim for men the attributes of God. An attempt to turn people from their devotion to Jehovah (Deut. 13.6-10) was punishable with death according to

the Jewish law. See Matt. 26.65, 66.—*Against Moses.* Contempt of Moses was regarded as contempt of Jehovah.

12. *The elders and scribes.* They represented the Pharisees.—*Council.* The Sanhedrin.

13. *False witnesses.* Compare Mark 14.56.—*This holy place.* The temple. The meeting place of the Sanhedrin was on the Temple Mount, and the Temple was in view.

14. *Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place.* Compare the charge against Jesus, Mark 14.58, based on His words recorded in John 2.19. Stephen probably had repeated Jesus' words.—*Shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.* The Mosaic laws contained in the Pentateuch, and the Jewish commentary, the "traditions of the elders," with its minute laws. It is evident from his defence, 7.48, that Stephen taught that God could be worshipped everywhere, not alone in the temple.

15. *Saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.* "God's glory smote him on the face" (*Tennyson*). See Isa. 26.3.

54. *They gnashed on him with their teeth.* "The words express the frenzy of rage, only restrained by a brute-like grinding of the teeth" (*Lindsay*).

55. *Saw.* "A vision of the soul."—*The glory of God.* The Shechinah.

56. *I see the heavens opened.* "The opening of the heavens is a Jewish metaphor for insight into divine things. Compare 10.11; Luke 3.21; Rev. 4.1; 19.11" (*Rackham*).—*The Son of man...God.* The phrase, *Son of Man,* was a favorite title of Jesus for Himself, but is not used by His disciples except here and in Rev. 1.13 and 14.14 (quoted in Heb. 2.6); it occurs in the words of the prophecy which Stephen's vision fulfills. *Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power,* Matt. 26.64.—*On the right hand of God.* This, of course, is a metaphor, for God is Spirit; it expresses the exaltation of Jesus. See Matt. 5.44.

59. *The Lord.* Jesus.

60. *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* Compare Jesus' words, Luke 23.34. —*He fell asleep.* Our word *cemetery* comes from the Greek κοιμητήριον, which means *Sleeping-place.*

1. *Saul was consenting unto his death.* See Paul's words in Acts 22.20; Gal. 1.13.—*There arose on that day a great persecution.* "Stephen's martyrdom acted like the first taste of blood on a wild beast" (*Calvin*).—*Judea.* Here the term probably includes Galilee and Perea.

3. *But Saul laid waste the church.* See Acts 22.4, 19-20; 26.10-11; 29.9-11.—*Dragging. Haling* in the authorized version is from an old English verb meaning to *haul.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

59. *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* Stephen's calm committal of his spirit to his Lord, is so palpably inconsistent with the doctrine of a state of purgatory, or sleep, between death and the judgment, that Roman Catholic theology exempts all martyrs from purgatorial discipline. *Lyman Abbot, The Acts.*

59. *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* To go out of life because we must, is misery, to go out because our willls accept the necessity, is triumph and victory. The one is death indeed, the other is the opening of the spirit to the influx of a larger life. Blessed is he who at that last hour goes willingly, because he knows that he goes after his Lord, recognizing that the grave, too, is a "place whither the Forerunner for us is entered." He is Heaven, and Heaven is He. Stephen knew very little of what he was to meet beyond this earth, but he knew whom he was to meet, and that was enough for him. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Last Sheaves.*

1. *Except the apostles.* They, as the commissioned witnesses and leaders, did not feel free to anticipate the days of arrest by flight. Perhaps their known orthodoxy as regards temple-worship may have helped to shelter them, in contrast to Stephen's Hellenist fellow believers, who probably felt the brunt of the attack. See 11.19f. *J. Vernon Bartlet.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

58. *They cast him out of the city and stoned him.* Stoning was the custo-

mary Jewish mode of inflicting the death penalty, but under the Roman rule only the Roman procurator had the right to put any one to death (John 18.31). The stoning always took place outside the city, and according to Leviticus 24.14 the witnesses who testified against the accused must cast the first stones, after having first placed their hands on his head to signify that he was bearing his own guilt. (Compare the custom in the case of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16.21, 22.)

According to Lightfoot a man was stationed at the door of the Sanhedrin to wave a handkerchief should a belated witness come to testify in behalf of the accused, and there was a horseman stationed as far off as he could see the handkerchief whose duty it was to call back the procession when the handkerchief was waved. A crier went before the condemned one announcing his crime, and at the place of execution the latter was asked to confess his crime to God. The Sanhedrin may have legally put to vote the question of sentencing Stephen, and though they and the people with them became a mob intent only on Stephen's death, part, at least, of the requirements seem to have been carried out. The witnesses laid aside their flowing outer garments in order that they might cast their stones, and it may have been when asked to confess that Stephen had the opportunity of kneeling down and praying. When stoning was calmly carried out, the two witnesses, according to Lightfoot, hurled the condemned man down from a height of twelve feet and then flung upon him two large stones. If he was not killed at once, the multitude present then took part in the stoning.

58. *A young man named Saul.* According to Greek custom, a man could be called young until he was forty years of age.

60. *He fell asleep.* From very early times the Church held its martyrs in special honor, and where they could they erected chapels over their tombs. When they observed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper they were wont to recite the names of the martyrs after thanking God "for those who had departed this life in His faith and fear." The day on which a martyr died was celebrated as his birthday. "St. Stephen's Birthday" they called the day of the stoning, for, said they, was it not for him a birth into a better life?

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Everywhere throughout the Roman Empire and especially in Palestine, great poverty existed. The greater part of the people of Jerusalem who accepted the apostles' teachings and became disciples of Christ were very poor. Now and then a rich man like Barnabas sold his possessions and brought all the proceeds, and those a little better off than the poorest added to the sum of which the apostles had charge, from which distribution was made to those in need.

Ordination of a Deacon. From a Bas-relief in the Catacombs.

The Grecian Jews, or Hellenists as they are often called,—those who had been born outside of Palestine and spoke the Greek language,—complained because they thought their widows were not getting as large a share as the Hebrew widows. The apostles gladly seized the opportunity to free themselves from all care of the money, that they might have more time for "continuing steadfastly in prayer and in the ministering of the word." They asked that "seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" be chosen to have charge of the distribution. The seven were elected by the Church: Stephen, Philip, a

proselyte of Antioch, and four others, and the apostles consecrated them to their office. According to tradition they were known as deacons. Peace having been restored within the Church, the number of disciples increased greatly; among them were found even a large company of the priests.

Meanwhile Stephen, one of the seven thus chosen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" had become well-known through his preaching and teaching. Our lesson begins with an account of the hostility he aroused among the Grecian Jews. The date of the lesson can not be given definitely. The frequent summaries of the growth of the Church indicate that several years had passed since Pentecost. The fact that Stephen was stoned to death by the people although only the procurator could legally inflict the death penalty, has suggested that the time was 36 or 37 A. D., after Pilate had been deposed and before another procurator was appointed. Some scholars assign an earlier date.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The charge against Stephen and his defence were made at the regular meeting-place of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, and then he was hurried outside the city walls to "the place of stoning." According to rabbinical tradition, the place was north of the city outside the modern Damascus Gate (formerly called St. Stephen's Gate), the hill now known as "the new Calvary," the most probable site of the crucifixion of Christ. Another site east of the city is also shown to visitors as the place of stoning, outside the gate now called in honor of the martyr, St. Stephen's Gate, near the brook Kidron.

The Libertines, mentioned in verse 9, were probably Jews or their descendants who had been taken to Italy by Pompey as slaves and afterwards received their liberty and were allotted a section in Rome for their residence. There is still in Rome a ghetto, or Jewish quarter, where only Jews live. In 19 A. D. a decree of Tiberius banished them to Sardinia, and many returned to Jerusalem.

Find Cyrene and Alexander, cities of northern Africa, and Cilicia and Asia, provinces of Asia Minor, on the large colored map.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A few years ago there was a strike declared among the coal miners in Belgium. Mr. Banescote, the Superintendent, was urged by his friends not to go to the mines, but he answered simply, "I am a Christian; nothing can make me afraid." He had done much for those miners, and had always treated them as friends. But one of the miners shot at him behind his back, and for three days he lay in great suffering. During all those long hours of agony not one word of bitterness or hatred or revengeful feeling passed his lips, and when he was dying his last words were, "Father, forgive them."

What were Jesus' words as He was nailed to the cross? To-day we learn about another faithful follower of Jesus who also could forgive the enemies who caused his death.

For Older Pupils. "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," said Jesus to His disciples before His ascension. The Acts is a record of the way in which this commission was carried out. With our lesson to-day we finish the record of the first stage, the witnessing in Jerusalem. Next week we take up the witnessing in "all Judea and Samaria."

What has been the result of the witnessing in Jerusalem? On the day of Pentecost? In Solomon's Porch? What was the last report of the growth of the Church? What two troubles had arisen within the Church? How was each settled? What persecutions had befallen the apostles? What aroused the hostility of the Sadducees? To what preaching did they object? Why? What aroused the opposition of the Pharisees?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Face Disclosures

The Reflected Light. And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on

Stephen, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Stephen began his speech by saying: "Brethren and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham." He could call his enemies "fathers," and his thoughts were filled with "the God of Glory"—no wonder that the face of such a man seemed the face of an angel! After Moses had communed with God on the Mount, his face shone with so bright a glory, we are told, that until the brightness began to fade away men could not look on him.

"Beautiful thoughts make a beautiful soul,
And a beautiful soul makes a beautiful face."

When Jesus was praying on the "Mount of Transfiguration," "the fashion of his countenance was altered," and Peter and James and John saw "his glory." Doctor Maclaren, in commenting on the transfigured face of Christ, says: "That altered fashion of countenance may stand as a symbol of the power of communion with God to breathe new beauty into our earthly life, and we, too, may have 'the glory of God' reflected on our faces as on Stephen's, if we steadfastly look up into Heaven. Only in his case, and in ours, the glory is reflected from above, and in Christ's case it came from within. ...Let us keep near Him in the secret place that our faces may shine with reflected luster, and then come down into the camp to let our light so shine that men may glorify the Uncreated Light at which it was kindled."

A Good Face Transformed. It is said that the artist Da Vinci, after he had completed the portraits of the eleven disciples in his painting, *The Last Supper,* waited long for models of Christ and of Judas. One day he saw a young man singing in the choir of the Milan cathedral whose face answered to his idea of the Christ, and he asked him to be his model. Long then he searched among the haunts of vice for a satisfactory model of Judas. At last in Rome, in a prison-cell, he found and sketched the face he had been seeking. And afterwards he learned that this Judas was the same man who ten years before had posed for the strong and gentle face of Jesus! All faces tell the truth, an old writer has declared. Was he right?

An Evil Face Transformed. Valentine Burke, who for twenty years had been a professional burglar, was converted while in prison by reading one of Mr. Moody's sermons. For a long time after his release from prison he could get no work, for his sins had left their mark on his face and people would not trust him. It was with him as with the wicked people of Jerusalem of whom Isaiah said that "the show of their countenance doth witness against them." Mr. Moody told the story of how Burke prayed God to make him a better-looking man so that he could get an honest job, and in proof that his prayer was answered Mr. Moody showed two pictures, one of the burglar in prison, and the other after he had become an active Christian worker. When Burke was a deputy sheriff in St. Louis, Mr. Moody went to see him and found him guarding a bag of diamonds valued at $60,000. "See what the grace of God can do for a burglar," said he to Mr. Moody. "The sheriff, who knows my past record, picked me out of the force to guard it."

II Consenting to the Sin of Others

Saul's Guilt. When the witnesses against Stephen were about to cast the first stones, they took off their outer garments and laid them for safe keeping at the feet of a young man named Saul. This is our first introduction to the man who became the greatest of the apostles. "And Saul was consenting to his death," the historian adds later in his account of Stephen's martyrdom. Saul was not only willing but he willed that Stephen be put to death. He did not throw the stones himself, but he rejoiced to see the others throwing them.

Saul's responsibility for Stephen's death was as great as that of the murderers. "Sympathy with rascality is sister to rascality itself" said the Greek philosopher Theophrastus. Morally we are responsible, not alone for the evil we do, but for the evil we consent to. In the words of Dr. Henry Ward Beecher: If you put the torch to your neighbor's house, you are guilty in one way; but if another puts the torch to that house, and you go by and see the

flames and say, "It is not my business, I did not kindle the fire, and, besides, he is an enemy of mine," you are as culpable as if you had set fire to the house yourself.

Who was Responsible. Phil Boyd had been a good-for-nothing for many years. That he should slip at last into prison seemed the natural end of his career. "Ten years!" The judge, they whispered, gave him a heavy sentence because of his having been a scapegrace so long. The jury was discharged, and Phil was led back to jail. The round, good-natured face had a strange, new meaning in it as he turned at the door for a last look at his old friends and townsmen.

Ten years down in the depths with thieves and murderers? He could never turn over a new leaf and be a good man now. And Phil, almost every day of his life, had meant to be a good man. He had even tried sometimes, in a feeble way, to turn over a new leaf. But this was the end.

But in the hot sleepy afternoon, had no one but Phil been on trial? There was his mother, who knew his love of idling, his weak affection for his friends when he was a child, and who was too busy keeping her house dainty, and struggling to dress in the fashion, to hold out a persistently helping hand to the boy.

There too, was his father, who had punished him when he had caught him in a lie, but never once told him of the one Friend whose teachings would help to make him truthful.

There were the young fellows, too, who had first invited him to drink. Their own heads were strong. Hardly one of them had become a drunkard.

There was his sister, of whom he was so fond when a boy. Phil had bored her. She had made intimate friends, but he was not one of them.

There was the girl who had promised to marry him as soon as he should be able to maintain her. It was to give her the jewelry and costly trifles so dear to her foolish heart that he had committed his crime.

These people all went to their homes unblamed by man, and Phil went to prison. Yet in a court which no man saw, they had been that day on trial before a Judge in whose decisions the weak are remembered with pity, and in whose clear sight guilt in all its varying conditions and degrees finds condemnation. In the decisions of that tribunal was Phil alone the sinner? *The Youth's Companion.*

Whoso prevents not the commission of a wrong when he can do so, commands it to be done. *Seneca.*

III Missionary Topic Christian Martyrs

Stephen Thy Witness. Who is called a martyr? One who has been put to death for his faith, you answer. That is the meaning of the word as it is now used, but originally it meant only a witness. The Greek word μαρτυρ, from which it is derived, is used for witness throughout the Acts. Only in one instance is it translated martyr: in Acts 22.20 Paul says, "And when the blood of the martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death." In the Revised Version the original word is restored, and it reads, Stephen thy witness. Because witnessing to the truth was so generally attended by persecution, a witness or martyr was one who suffered for the cause he loved, and early writers applied the word to those who were persecuted unto death. In this sense Stephen was the first Christian martyr. What countless thousands imbued with his spirit have suffered martyrdom since then!

The Early Christians. The author of the Epistle to Diognetus pays this tribute to the Christians as he knew them: "The Christians love all men, and yet are persecuted by all. They are put to death, and yet are raised to life. They are poor, and yet are made rich. They are dishonored, and yet by their dishonor are covered with glory. They are defamed, and yet are counted righteous. They are reviled, and yet bless. They are insulted, and entreat men honorably. They do good, and are punished as evil-doers, and when punished "they rejoice, as being raised to life."

The Martyr Spirit. A little over three years ago four missionaries were murdered in Lienchou, China. Two of them were young student volunteers, Mr. and Mrs. Peale, who had reached the mission station only the night be-

fore. The plan of the Missionary Board had been to send them to Yeung-Kong, and Mr. Kunkle, another young student, to Lienchou, but as Mr. Kunkle received a fellowship in England and decided to give another year to his studies, the Board, thinking the station at Lienchou the more urgent, sent Mr. and Mrs. Peale there in his stead. Do you think that when the terrible news o what would have been his own fate reached Mr. Kunkle, he would still be willing to go to China? These are the words he wrote to the Board as soon as he learned what had happened: "I cannot help thinking that had I been more faithful, it would have been I that had gained a martyr's crown, and a better than I spared for the work. Now I earnestly seek the privilege of taking the place of the martyred Peale, and if in your judgment this sad event and the increased need justify my leaving my studies and proceeding at once to China, I am read to sail."

SENTENCE SERMONS

No man ever accomplished much for God or man without the martyr spirit. *Cyrus D. Foss.*

Fearless minds climb soonest into crowns. *Shakespeare.*

Christ leads me through no darker rooms than he went before. *Richard Baxter.*

Every right action and true thought sets the seal of its beauty on person and

The Christian ought to wear the kind of face that would be worth going two blocks to see. *Moody.*

Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints. Psa. 116.15.

Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you. Matt. 5.44.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

We read how the mob stoned Stephen and we shudder. We think that if we could have heard him say that he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and could have seen his face when it seemed the face of an angel, we should only have longed for the same experience as his, and our lives would have been ennobled by his example. Yet we remember that Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Woe unto you, for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days o our fathers, we should not have been partakers in the blood of the prophets." Are we hypocrites, too, in being ready to "garnish the tombs of the righteous" in our thoughts?

When those distinguished members of the Sanhedrin went to their place o meeting they little thought that later they would be gnashing their teeth like infuriated beasts. He who has "a hasty temper" needs to keep it under careful control.

No one who had not lived loftily could die so triumphantly as Stephen.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

How little we know about Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and yet how much we know! He was "of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom," "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." These words explain why he was people," why he was granted the vision of Christ, why he was enabled boldly people," why he was granted the vision of Christ, why he was enabled boldly to withstand his accusers, and triumphantly to die in the cause he loved.

Grecian Jews from Italy and Africa and Asia Minor disputed with Stephen in their synagogues, and when they were baffled in their attempt to withstand his arguments they had recourse to treachery. Secretly they induced men to agree to witness against him, and by misrepresenting his teaching, they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes. When they had thus secured the fickle popular favor, they seized Stephen and brought him to trial before the Sanhedrin. The false witnesses declared that they had heard him speak against that holy place, the tempel, saying that Jesus of Nazareth should destroy it, and against the laws delivered by Moses, that Jesus should change them.

"Are these things so?" questioned the high priest. Stephen had no doubt declared that God could be worshipped elsewhere than in the temple, and that the law should pass away in the sense of being perfectly fulfilled in Christ. The injustice of the accusation made his eyes flash fire, and those who looked saw "God's glory smite him on the face." "Brethren and fathers, hearken," he began, and then he rehearsed the ancient history of Israel, God's dealings with Abraham and Joseph and Moses and the children of Israel in the wilderness and David and Solomon. His hearers listened at first without realizing the drift of his words, but when it gradually dawned upon them that he was skillfully showing that God's revelation to His people had been a progressive one, that their fathers had always been rebellious, first rejecting God's messages and afterwards accepting them, and that their religion was a spiritual religion, that God did not need an earthly temple, as a quotation from Isaiah proved, their anger knew no bounds. Stephen saw that if he would apply his words to his audience he must do so quickly. Boldly and forcibly he drew his lesson: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcized in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye, ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not."

Stephen's audience gnashed their teeth in their fury, but Stephen looking calmly upward was no longer in the council-chamber: "Behold," he declared, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." What blasphemy was this! He whom they had crucified was exalted to power! Stopping their ears, the infuriated mob rushed upon him and dragged him without the city. To slay him in the city, to kill him by any other means than by stoning, or to hurl their stones before the legal witnesses had first cast theirs, would be to violate the laws of Moses. These laws they were careful to keep, but they cared not in their rage for the Roman law which took from them the power to execute the death penalty. The stones flew swift and sure on their deadly mission. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," cried Stephen, and then he added, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." He felt asleep, and devout men buried him.

The record of the witnessing for Jesus in Jerusalem is now finished. Henceforth the Gospel is to be carried to Samaria and all Judea and then beyond, for the death of Stephen was but the beginning of a reign of terror which drove the disciples away from Jerusalem. There was a young Pharisee named Saul in whose care the witnesses had left their outer-garments when they cast their stones at Stephen, who was foremost in this persecution: armed with a commission from the high priests he visited every house where there were known to be followers of Jesus, and seizing both men and women thrust them into prison, there to be beaten and tortured if they refused to give up their allegiance to their Lord.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The probable effect of Stephen's trial upon Paul. See Dr. Lyman Abbott's "Life and Letters of Paul," pages 32-34.
2. Lynch law. See article by J. E. Cutler in the *Outlook* for Feb. 2, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read carefully the first 25 verses of the 8th chapter of the Acts. 2. Who was Philip? (Acts 6.5.) 3. What is he called in Acts 21.8? 4. How did the Jews regard the Samaritans? (John 4.9.) 5. When and why had Jesus forbidden His disciples to preach in Samaria? (Matt. 10.5, 6.) 6. Tell the parable by which Jesus taught respect for a Samaritan. (Luke 17.30-37.) 7. With what result had Jesus once preached to the Samaritans? (John 4.4-24.) 8. What had John once wished to have befall the Samaritans because they refused to receive Jesus? (Luke 9.54.) 9. What was the difference between Simon's magic, and Philip's works? (Simon wrought for money and for self, mere wonders, of no use to any one; his works were his own; not wrought through him by divine power.) 10. What was Simon's sin? 11. Does it exist to-day? 12. What command did the preaching in Samaria fulfill? (Acts 1.8.)

LESSON IX—FEBRUARY 28

THE GOSPEL IN SAMARIA

Read Acts 8.4-25. Commit verses 14, 15.

Golden Text

The multitude gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard and saw the signs which he did. Acts 8.6.

LESSON TEXT Acts 8.14-25

14 Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: 16 for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money , 19 saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. 23 For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. 24 And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

14. *Heard that Samaria had received the word of God.* Compare John 4.9; Acts 1.8; 8.4.

15. *Prayed that they might receive the Holy Spirit.* The manifestations of the Holy Spirit, seen in extraordinary signs, such as the speaking with tongues at Pentecost, is evidently meant.

16. *It. It* instead of *He,* because in Greek the word for Spirit is neuter. The verse is parenthetical.

17. *Then laid they their hands on them.* "The apostles supposed that the Spirit would be given in answer to prayer and the laying on of their hands. Their expectation was justified." (*Rackham*).

18. *Simon.* See verses 9-13. He is later called Simon Magus, Simon the Magician.—*Saw.* There seem to have been visible phenomena.

19. *Give me also this power.* He would buy the power that he might sell it to others.

20. *Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money.* This sounds like an imprecation, but in verse 22 Peter urges Simon to pray for forgiveness, thus showing that here he is only forcibly expressing his detestation of such a spirit as Simon's. From this proposal of Simon comes our word *simony,* meaning trafficking in sacred things.

21. *Thou hast neither part nor lot.* An emphatic assertion. See Deut. 10.9; 12.12.—*Matter.* R. V. M., Greek, *word.*—*Thy heart is not right before God.* See Psa. 78.37.

22. *If perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee.* "Peter neither

forgives nor condemns; he stands midway between hope and fear, and keeping silence, leaves judgment to the Judge" (*Plumptre*).

23. *Art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.* R. V. M., *Will become gall of bitterness and a bond of iniquity.* Compare Deut. 29.18; Heb. 12.15. "There is a double metaphor. The ancients considered that the gall of noxious reptiles was the source of their venom, and Peter warns Simon that unless repentance comes he will become worse and worse until he becomes all venom; that is the first metaphor. The second represents Simon as a chain or band of iniquity, and perhaps means that not only will Simon become concentrated essence of evil, but that he will become so habituated to being it, that he will not be able to back away from it" (*Lindsay*).

24. *Then Simon answered and said, Pray for me to the Lord.* He thinks they can work greater sorceries than he himself (verse 10, 11), and therefore their prayers will be of greater avail.—*The things.* He fears punishment, but is not repentant.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

18. *The Holy Spirit was given.* Possibly if the matter had been plainly put before them, all the members of the Apostolic Church would have acknowledged that the Holy Spirit was the source of faith, hope and love, as well as of tongues, and prophesyings, and miraculous healings. Only the latter phenomena appeared the more remarkable and the former appeared a matter of course; whence it resulted that the gift of the Holy Spirit came in ordinary dialect to mean, not the power to believe, hope and love, but the power to speak ecstatically, and to prophesy enthusiastically, and to heal the sick by a word of prayer. *A. B. Bruce,* in *The Expositor.*

20. *Thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money.*

Earth gets its price for what earth gives us:
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us;
We bargain for the graves we lie in.
At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold.

For a cap and bells our lives we pay;
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking.

James Russell Lowell, in *The Vision of Sir Launfal.*

22. *This thy wickedness.* The sin of Simon is virtually repeated when a man gets himself appointed to office in the church, not that he may do God's work, but that he may make a living or gratify his ambition; when he seeks a reputation for piety that he may secure his own temporal advantage; when for the sake of fame he covets the power of converting others while careless of his own spiritual state. *Thomas M. Lindsay.*

22. *Repent of this thy wickedness.* It has often been observed that Simon Magus is much more gently dealt with than Ananias, for a crime of similar turpitude. Both were guilty of sinning against the Holy Ghost; Ananias of an attempt to deceive Him, and Simon of a wish to purchase His gifts with money. But whereas Ananias, without a moment's respite, fell down dead at the apostle's feet; Peter, while he severely rebukes Simon, does not exclude him from hope of forgiveness. But the cases are entirely dissimilar. Ananias was the greater criminal of the two. Simon sinned in comparative ignorance—he himself had not received the Holy Ghost, and he was a stranger to the Spiritual nature of religion—he was so deceived by his own magical arts, that he entertained the monstrous opinion that he could purchase the Holy Ghost; whereas Ananias sinned in knowledge—he was a member of the Christian Church and most probably a partaker of the extraordinary influences of the Spirit. Simon sinned openly—there was no disguise, no concealment, about his offer; whereas falsehood constituted the essence of the sin of Ananias. Although it is said that Simon believed Philip, yet he can hardly be called a Christian

at all—he was an outsider; whereas Ananias belonged to the Christian community. The judgment inflicted upon Ananias was necessary to preserve the purity of the church at its commencement; whereas there was no such necessity in the case of Simon. *Paton J. Gloag,* in *Commentary on Acts.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

14. *The apostles heard that Samaria had received the word of God.* Who were the Samaritans? After the Assyrians conquered Samaria the Israelite inhabitants were taken to Babylonia, and colonists were brought from Babylonia to occupy their place in Samaria. The latter Jews regarded the Samaritans as of pure heathen origin, descendants of those Babylonians, and in no way akin to them, but the Samaritans claimed that not all the Jews had been driven from Samaria at the time of the Captivity, and through intermarriage there was in their veins an admixture of Jewish blood. To these hated and despised people of Samaria Philip had come proclaiming unto them the Christ. A Jew of to-day, we are told by a native of Palestine, will not occupy a seat on which a Samaritan has just sat, will not drink out of a cup handled by the Samaritans, will not buy or sell anything to them, though he may employ them as menials, to do what he terms mean work.

17. *Then laid they their hands on them.* The imposition of hands was an ancient custom. When Joshua was solemnly appointed as Moses' successor, we read in Deut. 27 that "Jehovah said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thy hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight." On the great Day of Atonement the law was that "Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and he shall put them upon the head of the goat." In the apostolic church the custom was practised on various occasions. When "the Seven" were dedicated to their office, the apostles prayed and laid their hands upon them (Acts 6.6).

19. *Give me also this power.* The whole East at this time, we are told by the historian Suetonius, was flooded with Messianic expectations, and the expectations produced a harvest of false Christs. But apart from such special ideas, there was, in the decay and exhaustion of the old pagan religions, a greatly increased demand among men for religious teachers, to tell them something of the truth, to heal their diseases of spirit and mind as well as of body, to open up some channel of intercourse with the spiritual world, and, in a word, give them some knowledge of God. The class of "prophets," "seers" and "magi," who answered to this demand had always existed in the East, but now they were especially abundant. They appeared sometimes as exorcists, healers, wonder-workers; sometimes as astrologers or spiritualists. Some really tried to fill the place of philosophers and moral teachers; others claimed to be prophets and possess a divine inspiration. A few of the class may have been great men with more or less sincerity, like Apollonius of Tyana, whose biography was put forward in a later generation to compete with the Gospels. But the temptation to gain and cheat was too powerful, and the majority were nothing else than pretenders, quacks, and charlatans. Some were learned in astrology and the learning of the East, and the magi of Chaldea had an honorable reputation. But the boundaries between true and false science, as between religion and superstition, had not yet been clearly marked out, and so the word *magus* had already acquired its evil associations of magic and sorcery. As the counterfeit of the true, these false prophets were among the most dangerous enemies of Christianity; and the distinction between religion and spiritualism had to be drawn sharply once for all. *R. B. Rackham,* in *Commentary on the Acts.*

So prevalent was the practice of magic among the heathen that, as Augustine informs us, it was generally believed by them that Jesus wrote books upon magical arts, which He delivered to Peter and Paul for the use of the disciples.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The persecution which immediately followed the stoning of Stephen forced

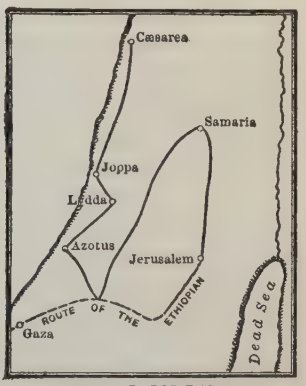
the disciples to flee from Jerusalem. The apostles, indeed, remained at their post, and they seem not to have aroused the wrath of the Pharisees against themselves so much as did the aggressive Grecian Jews in the Church. The disciples took up the work of preaching the gospel in many lands, and the first foreign missionary work which Luke records was in Samaria. Samaria was, in truth, a foreign field, for the Jews hitherto had cordially hated the Samaritans and would have "no dealings with them." Philip, one of "the Seven," known later as Philip the Evangelist (Acts 21.8), probably little realized the greatness of the movement he was inaugurating when he "went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ." He found the fields "white unto harvest"; the people accepted his good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and were baptized. There was great joy among them when many with unclean spirits, the palsied, and the lame, were healed.

Among those who heard Philip was a magician named Simon. Until Philip's coming he had amazed the people with his sorceries, and they had thought him to be what he claimed, akin to God. Seeing the miracles wrought through Philip, Simon believed Philip a greater magician than himself; he was baptized and continued with Philip as one of the disciples.

The date of the lesson is soon after the stoning of Stephen. Refer to the diagram, page 17. While the length of time covered by the events narrated in the first seven chapters of the Acts is not known and may have been very brief, a period of at least six years is usually allowed for them.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Palestine west of the Jordan consisted of three districts; Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Judea and Samaria together formed a Roman province. Peter and John went north from Jerusalem in Judea into Samaria, where Philip was preaching. In verse 5 it is stated that Philip went "to the city of Samaria." The city called Samaria, which had given its name to the northern part of the Roman province, was called Sebaste by Herod the Great, hence some other city may be meant—perhaps Sychar or Shechem.



PHILIP'S JOURNEYS

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In February of last year we had a lesson about Jesus and His talk with a woman of Samaria. Where did the woman meet Him? Near what city was Jacob's well? For what did Jesus ask her? Why was she surprised? The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, they hated them bitterly, and the Samaritans hated them in return. Jesus did not hate them, and He was as ready to bring to them His good tiding as to the Jews. On that visit to Samaria when He talked with the woman at the well a great many of the Samaritans came to hear His words, and they believed that "He is indeed the Saviour of the world." We hear to-day how Jesus' followers came to the Samaritans whom they had hated, and taught them about Him, and how gladly these people believed their words. What had made the disciples leave Jerusalem?

For Older Pupils. Not long ago in the city of Oaxaca, Mexico, the birthplace of President Diaz, I read a notice attached to the great door of the cathedral of *La Soledad,* which announced the result of "a raffle for souls." It contained a list of sixteen names of "those souls who drew prizes in the raffle which was held in the parish church of *La Sangre de Christi* in behalf of the faithful souls in Purgatory." The one who had bought a ticket and drawn the first prize was thus assured that all the masses said during the first half hour of the day would be for the benefit of the soul of a friend whom he named, and so on down the list. Another notice on the same door proclaimed in

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Spanish that "In the church of *Santo Domingo* a *Via crucis* will be held for the peace of souls in Purgatory. All persons who wish to contribute to the expense of this *Via crucis*, in order that their dead friends may have part therein, will inform the undersigned. Angel Alfonso Vasconcelos." The Roman Catholics in some parts of Mexico to-day are as ready to perform their so-called spiritual offices for money as was Tetzel when he sold forgiveness as one sells bread, and for a goodly sum of money gave a clear title to heavenly bliss.

The first instance in the Bible of a man who thought he could purchase spiritual power with money, is given in our lesson to-day.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Worthless Belief

The Trouble with Simon's Belief. The people who heard Philip preaching the good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ believed and were baptized, and among those who heard and believed and were baptized was Simon the sorcerer (verses 12 and 13). Yet though he believed, he was told by Peter that he had neither part nor lot in this matter, for his heart was not right before God. Did not Paul tell the Philippian jailer that he should be saved if he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? Why, then, did not Simon's belief save him?

To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ does not mean merely to give the assent of your mind to the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Saviour of the world. This much Simon believed, he granted that Jesus was the Christ as Philip had said. Faith is not a mere intellectual belief in a doctrine. Faith is also an attitude. To believe Jesus is to accept Jesus, to be loyal to Jesus. "Faith is that act and habit of the mind by which the truth of God is brought in and made a part of one's very being." It is not the faith that a man says he holds, but the faith that his life says holds him, that is saving faith. The trouble with Simon's faith was that it was a mere belief that had not laid hold of him, it had had no effect upon his life. Said Dr. Chalmers, "Our only business with Christianity is to proceed upon it." Simon thought he had believed and that was the end as far as he himself was concerned, that his only further business with Christianity was to make money out of it.

Another Simon. Protestant Christianity in China has suffered for more than a generation to some extent from the odium of the Taiping Rebellion. The rebellion was started by a young Chinese, who had had some slight contact with Christianity through one of our Protestant schools. He claimed that during an illnes he received a vision of Jesus Christ. He later went to one of our Protestant missionaries and spent a few weeks with him, professing to seek to fit himself for the ministry of the Gospel, but fortunately was refused baptism because he demanded a guarantee of monthly wages following his baptism. This young man, Hung Sin-tsenen, while he was not received into any Christian church, nevertheless conducted his agitation under the guise of a Christian, giving instruction in the New Testament and proposing to establish the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace upon earth, so that the very name of the rebellion, the Taiping Rebellion, means the Great Peace Rebellion. Later he claimed to be a younger brother of Jesus Christ. Thus the name of Christ was used to sanction more horrible butcheries in China than have disgraced the church in Europe. The rebellion spread throughout China and the loss of life by sword, famine and pestilence during the thirteen years is estimated by the careful author of the "Middle Kingdom" at twenty million people. *J. W. Bashford,* in *God's Missionary Plan for the World.*

II The Thought of Thy Heart

Simon's Wickedness. Simon thought that Peter and John were sorcerers like himself. He measured them by himself. He saw the effect of the coming of the Spirit upon the people, and he thought that he could buy from Peter the power to produce this result just as he had probably bought from sorcerers instruction in some magical feat. He offered his money, saying, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands he may receive the Holy

Spirit." His life had been spent in deceiving people with his tricks, "giving out that himself was some great one." Until the coming of Philip the people had believed in him, they had said "This man is that power of God which is called Great." Now he will lose his power over them, will lose their homage and their money, unless he can equal Peter and John in their magical trick, as he seemed to consider their gift of the Spirit. His thoughts were so occupied with his own sorceries, with the desire for fame and love of money, that he could not grasp the idea of a spiritual power. His heart was not right toward God, as Peter told him, he needed to pray that the thought of his heart be forgiven him. The thoughts that he put into words were wicked because his heart was wrong toward God. Simon had done nothing, he had only spoken a wicked thought, and very justly Peter's wrath was kindled against him.

Thoughts swerve the Life from Godliness. What is described as probably the largest meteorite known in the world, was brought to New York from the coast of Greenland by Lieutenant Peary. On the cruise home the presence of this magnetic iron in the hold of the ship affected the compass, and whenever there was bad weather and the mariners had to depend on dead-reckoning they could not keep their course. So the "inward thought" in the depths of personality imparts a bias to the mind, confuses the judgment, cajoles the conscience, paralyses the will, and makes the life swerve from the line of godliness and righteousness. The first stage of all eccentricity of character and irregularity of life is in this secret inward leaning.

Remember that God knows "the inward thought," and judges it, and us by it. *William L. Watkinson,* in *The Duty of Imperial Thinking.*

Thoughts may be Controlled. We are not responsible for the thoughts that enter our minds, but we are responsible for harboring them. There is an Eastern saying that we can not prevent birds from alighting on our heads, but we can prevent them from making a nest there. The French General Turenne was not responsible for the trembling of his legs as he was about to engage in a battle one day. But he would have been responsible had he given up to that fear which found expression in this trembling. "You shake now," he exclaimed, "but you would shake worse if you knew where I am going to carry you!" As General Turenne controlled his legs and made them carry him into the thick of the fray, so we can control our thoughts and make them move in the right direction. The will can say to the brain, Your thought is base and unworthy of you, away with it; or it is idle and unprofitable, cast it forth; or it is true and noble and useful, treasure it. If the mind has been well-trained, it will obey. An untrained mind can not be trained all at once; the process must be gradual. Though gradual, it may be sure.

III Missionary Topic God Overrules

The Result of Stephen's Martyrdom and the Persecution that followed. When Philip the Evangelist went into Samaria and preached to the people there, he had no thought of the far-reaching consequences. He little realized that he was driving an entering wedge into the Jewish exclusiveness still prevailing in the new community of believers, a wedge which would eventually overthrow all prejudice and open a way for the bringing of the good news to Gentiles as well as to the half-alien Samaritans.

"Providence, like Hebrew, needs to be read backwards." Reading backwards the history of the apostolic church as we now can, we see that the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of believers which immediately followed were parts of God's plans for the more rapid expansion of His church. The believers would have remained in Jerusalem if undisturbed, but they were driven out of the Holy City and scattered abroad. The Greek verb translated "scattered abroad" means literally *to be sown abroad as seed;* like seed the word was sown and brought forth a hundred fold, for wherever the disciples went they preached Jesus. Years afterwards we hear of a church at Rome, and no one knows how it was founded, though many believe that those who fled from this persecution in Jerusalem brought their faith to the imperial city. We can never know how much these exiles accomplished everywhere, nor how much of their zeal was due to the example of Stephen's heroism.

How well these words of Browning's apply to such a death as Stephen's—

"This is not to die
If, by the very death which mocks me now,
The life that's left behind and past my power,
Is formidably doubled."

What the Death of a Chimney Sweep Accomplished. Among the many "home missionary works" of Lord Shaftesbury, were his efforts in behalf of the chimney sweeps of London. Little boys only four to seven years old were employed in cleaning out chimneys, being let down the flues by ropes for this work. Their sufferings were often most pitiable, and some were injured for life. Year after year Lord Shaftesbury brought up his bill before the Government for their relief, but nothing was done, the need was not realized, and his effort was called in the House "The pitiful cant of pseudo-philanthropy." But when a little child was suffocated in a flue in Staffordshire the truth of the situation was made evident, and the bill was passed.

Good that came from Evil. In 1859 a converted Jew was sent by the Episcopal Church of America to Shanghai as a missionary, and about twenty years later he was made Bishop of Shanghai. Six years afterwards he became paralyzed, and had to give up his episcopal jurisdiction. Till 1906 he lived almost helpless, but the use of the middle finger of each hand was left him, and with these he wrote on a typewriter a translation of the Old Testament into the Mandarin language, the chief Chinese dialect, and then the whole Bible into Easy Wenli, the more popular form of their written language. Dr. Schereschewsky was especially fitted for this work, because as a young man he had been educated in "all the wisdom of the Jews." Two hundred and fifty million Mandarin-speaking Chinese have been enabled by his labors to read the word of God. How much vaster a work he accomplished thus, than he could have accomplished in his duties as a bishop!

There is a Divinity that shapes our Ends. Morrison wished to be sent as a missionary to Africa, but was sent to China; Livingstone wished to be sent to China, but was sent to Africa. "Solemn, sedate Robert Morrison never could have won the love of the emotional Africans as Livingstone did, and Livingstone, the active worker, who hated book-making, never could have sat cooped up twelve hours a day deciphering Chinese."

SENTENCE SERMONS

The seed shaken out by the wind was carried by the wind to other fields: it dropped into open soil, and grew up a hundred fold. *Joseph Parker.*

I am confident that the Almighty has His plans and will work them out, and, whether we see it or not, they will be the wisest and the best for us. *Abraham Lincoln.*

If a man would hasten towards the good, he should keep his thoughts away from evil. *East Indian Saying.*

Not in vain the martyr's robe of fire
Is worn, nor the sad prisoner's fretting chain;
Since all, who suffer for Thy Truth, send forth,
Electrical, with every throb of pain,
Unquenchable sparks, Thy own baptismal rain
Of fire and spirit over all the earth. *Whittier.*

Peter's indictment is really a reproof of our generation: we men of the twentieth century have imagined too often that success is a matter of financial resource, that happiness and power can be quoted at market rates, and that the things that are excellent are knocked off to the highest bidder. *W. H. P. Faunce.*

Guard well thy thought:
Our thoughts are heard in Heaven!
Edward Young.

Crooked thoughts separate from God. *Wisdom of Solomon.*

Nae treasures, nor pleasures
Could make us happy long;
The heart ay's the part ay
That makes us right or wrong. *Burns.*

With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. Rom. 10.10.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Simon Magus was one of those whom Dr. R. A. Torrey says "profess to be Christians, but do not work much at it." Could this be said of you?

It was not the apostles, but the disciples, the rank and file of the Church, who were scattered abroad and who went about preaching the Word. The responsibility for witnessing for Christ does not rest on the leaders of the church alone.

Philip told Simon to repent of his wickedness, but Simon himself wished Philip to pray for him that he might be spared punishment. Repentence is the first step that one must take whose heart is not right before God.

Belief that is only an intellectual assent to the facts of the Gospel is not belief that saves.

To overcome the Jewish prejudice against the Samaritans the followers of Jesus needed only to go to Samaria and preach to them. John had once gone through Samaria with Jesus, and when the people of one village would not receive his Master he had angrily asked, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" and Jesus had rebuked him. Now he gladly called down upon them fire from heaven, not the destructive fire that consumes, but the flame of the Spirit that quickens. It has been well said that to overcome prejudice against the Chinese one needs only to teach in a Chinese Sunday School. If you are prejudiced against any one, do him a good deed.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Report reached the apostles at Jerusalem that Philip had preached the word of God to the Samaritans, and large numbers of them had believed and been baptized. Could it be possible that the Kingdom of God was to include these despised people! The news made so great an impression on the apostles at Jerusalem that they sent Peter and John to Samaria to investigate the new departure. Peter and John were satisfied that the divine purpose was being carried out, and they gave their sanction and encouragement to the movement by praying for the people and laying their hands upon them. The divine approval was shown by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the people.

What the visible signs of the coming of the Spirit were we can not know, but Simon the sorcerer beheld them, and coveted what he thought to be in the power of the apostles. He offered to give them money if they would tell him how he, too, could lay his hands on others and bring upon them the Holy Spirit. Horrified at such ignorance of the meaning of the gift of God, and at the wickedness of the thought that it could be bought with money, Peter exclaimed, "Thy silver perish with thee! Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right before God." And then he urged him to repent and pray God that the thought might be forgiven him, for Peter foresaw that his sin would become venomous, would menace the church and that he would be unable to free himself from it. Simon, however, only thought of the apostles as greater sorcerers than himself, and fearing not his sin but its punishment, asked them to pray for him that he might escape retribution.

On their way back to Jerusalem the apostles themselves preached the gospel in many villages of Samaria. Thus were Samaritans brought into the kingdom of God.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The history of confirmation.
2. The sin of simony.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Where is Gaza? 2. Where is Ethiopia? 3. What is said about Ethiopia in Psalm 68.31? 4. From what prophet was the Ethiopian reading? 5. How was the prophecy of verse 32 fulfilled in Jesus? (Matt. 26.52, 67, 68; 27.12-14, 27-31.) 6. When had Jesus Himself said that the words of Isaiah were fulfilled in Him? (Luke 4.17-21.) 7. What did Philip the apostle say when he was urging Nathanael to come and see Jesus? (John 1.45.)

LESSON X—MARCH 7

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

Read Acts 8.26-40. Commit verses 29-31.

Golden Text

Ye search the scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life: and these are they which bear witness of me. John 5.39.

LESSON TEXT Acts 8.26-38

26 But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. 27 And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; 28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this,

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
So he openeth not his mouth:
33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:
His generation who shall declare?
For his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other? 35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

26. *Spake.* Whether by vision or by inward suggestion is not told.—*The same is desert.* See the Geographical Background.

27. *Candace.* This was not a proper name, but like Pharaoh in Egypt or Cæsar in Rome, a title of the ruler.—*Queen of the Ethiopians.* They were always ruled by queens.—*Who had.* The treasurer, not Candace.—*To worship.* He was either a Jew who lived in Ethiopia, then, or a proselyte, a heathen converted to Judaism. Compare Psa. 68.31.

29. *The Spirit said.* The message came as a divine impulse.

30. *Understandest...readest.* A commentator points out that there is a play upon the sound here: the Greek words are γινώσκεις (ginôskeis) and ἀναγινώσκεις (anaginôskeis).

32. The quotation is from Isa. 53.7, the Greek, not the Hebrew, version.

33. *In his humiliation.* "When He humbled Himself in death, Phil. 2.8" (*Rackham*).—*His judgment was taken away.* "The judgment due Him, His rights of justice, were withheld by His enemies" (*Gloag*). By oppression and judgment he was taken away, Isa. 53.8.—*His generation who shall declare?* Various interpretations of these words have been given. "His generation is the new seed which He wins by His death. Psa. 22.30" (*Rackham*). "The

wickedness of His contemporaries in their treatment of him, who shall set forth?" (*Hackett*). As for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? Isa. 53.8.

34. *Of whom speaketh the prophet this?* "The earlier Jewish authorities all understood chapter 53 of Isaiah to refer to the coming Messiah; the later Jewish writers treat it either as a composition of Jeremiah or Josiah, and as referring to the writer himself, or as fulfilled in and by the sufferings inflicted upon the Jewish nation as a nation" (*Abbott*).

35. *And Philip opened his mouth.* Compare Matt. 5.2; Acts 10.34. This is a Hebrew expression indicating that the words uttered were not spoken by chance but with deliberate purpose. See second paragraph, page 13 of this "Guide."

36. *What doth hinder me to be baptized?* "Faith within and water without were ready" (*Bengel*).

37. This verse is wanting in the best Greek manuscripts, and has been omitted from the Revised Version. It is thought that it may have been written in the margin by an early copyist and then copied in with the text by a following scribe.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

26. *An angel of the Lord spake unto Philip.* The text does not give us a hint as to the character of the messenger whom God used on this occasion. A vision, a dream, a human agent, some natural circumstance or instrument, all these are in Holy Scripture or in contemporary literature styled God's angels or messengers. Men saw then more deeply than we do, recognized the hand of a superintending Providence where we behold only secondary agents, and in their filial confidence spoke of angels where we should only recognize some natural power. The whole topic of angelic agencies has been much confused for us by the popular notions about angels, notions which effect every one. When men speak or think of angelic appearances, they think of angels as they are depicted in sacred pictures. The conception of young men clad in long white and shining raiment, with beautiful wings dependent from their shoulders and folded by their sides, is an idea of the angels and angelic life derived from mediæval painters and sculptors, not from Holy Writ. The important point, however, for us to remember is that Philip here moved under external direction to the conversion of the Ethiopian. The same Spirit which sent His messenger to direct Philip, led Peter to move towards exactly the same south-western quarter of Palestine, where he was to remain working, meditating, praying till the hour had come when the next great step should be taken and the Gentiles admitted as recognized members of the Church. *G. T. Stokes,* in *The Expositor's Bible.*

26. *Arise, and go toward the south.* It must have seemed very strange and dark to Philip that he should be summoned from his Samaritan work. The tide was with him; enthusiasm was heightening; vast crowds were moved by the preaching of Christ crucified. It would have been hard to leave all that through sickness; it was doubly hard to do it when well and strong. Could no one else be found for the desert work? Was it right to leave the thousands in Samaria for the single chariot of a southern courtier? I am sure that Philip had many a thought like that. Then gradually it would grow very clear to him that a single soul must be very dear to God. He would remember how the shepherd left the ninety and nine, that the one sheep in the desert might be found. *G. H. Morrison,* in *The Footsteps of the Flock.*

31. *How can I except some one shall guide me?* How can any soul travel through life by the aid of a map which he does not understand? *Youth's Companion.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

28. *He was reading the prophet Isaiah.* The scroll from which he was reading was probably the Greek version, known to us as the Septuagint, for this was commonly used outside of Palestine. The quotation in verses 32 and 33 are from this version. From verse 30 we learn that he was reading aloud. The

Jewish rabbis taught that what was read aloud would be remembered, and they often insisted on this practice. It is still the custom in oriental lands to read aloud, even though alone. The scholars in Moslem schools read the Koran aloud. The practice of "studying" a lesson by reading it aloud over and over prevails in other lands. In village schools in Ireland I have heard fifteen or twenty pupils studying in this way, while in the same room the teacher was hearing a recitation.

32. *The passage of the scripture which he was reading.* The law and the prophets were read in regular order in the synagogue service, and because this section from Isaiah was the one read at the Feast of Tabernacles, it has been suggested that the eunuch had been to Jerusalem for that festival. It is quite probable, however, that in Jerusalem he heard about the life and death of Jesus and the claims made by the disciples that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of the Christ, and therefore he was reading the prophecies of Isaiah and trying to determine for himself whether the prophet was describing his own sufferings or the sufferings of the promised Christ.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The account of the conversion of the Ethiopian is given by Luke for the same reason that he records the preaching in Samaria, to show how the gospel was being carried beyond Jerusalem, this time to a man of great influence and authority in Africa. Philip must have been only one of many disciples who were spreading abroad the good news.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Philip was evidently in Samaria when he was directed to go southward to the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. Gaza was near the coast, about fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem. The old Gaza, which had been one of the five chief cities of the Philistines, had been destroyed in the first century before Christ; the new Gaza at this time was built on another site. Because the site of the old Gaza is spoken of by Josephus and Strabo as desert, and because it seems to him impossible to apply the word *desert* to any route from Jerusalem to Gaza, Dr. George Adam Smith thinks that the words "the same is desert" in verse 36 refer to Gaza, not to "the way" as some scholars believe.

Candace of Ethiopia, with Captives of War From a Sepulchral Pyramid near Ancient Meroë

There were several roads between Jerusalem and Gaza. It is impossible to determine where the meeting and the baptism took place. According to one tradition it was near Hebron, and various places among the Judean hills have been suggested; Dr. Smith suggests that it was on the Philistine Plain, since Philip was found immediately after at Azotus, the old Ashdod, twenty miles above Gaza. Philip continued northward, preaching the gospel in the cities on the way, till he reached Cæsarea, the Roman capital of the province of Judea. Here we find him one year later (Acts 21.8).

Ethiopia, the home of the Eunuch, was south of Egypt. In the northern part of Ethiopia, between the two rivers that unite to form the Blue Nile, was the larger kingdom called Meroë by the Romans, whose queens were known as Candace. The Ethiopian must have journeyed down the Nile Valley, across the Isthmus, and then up along the coast road to Gaza, and from there over the hill country to Jerusalem.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Once a man was put in prison in England for a deed

which another man had done. While there he heard a sermon, which led to his conversion. He determined that all his children, too, should become Christians, and he gave them each a Bible. One of his sons is now the famous evangelist known as "Gipsy Smith." "I used to get down under a hedge in a corner of the field, or under a tree anywhere," he says, "and hold my first Bible open before me, very often the wrong way up; but it was the Bible, and I believed it. I prayed beside that Bible—a little nomad, without school or any one to help me—'Lord Jesus, I cannot read this Book, but I want its spirit in my heart'; and that prayer was answered long before I could read a letter."

Nearly nineteen hundred years ago a great man was reading one of the books of the Bible. He could read the words, but he could not understand their meaning, and like this little English lad he had no one to help him. Who was he? Where was his home? Where had he been? Whom did God send to teach him how to have the spirit of the Book in his heart?

For Older Pupils. When Abraham left his ancestral home and journeyed towards Canaan, he believed that God had bidden him go, and that God was guiding him on his journey. With a similar belief and trust, Philip the Evangelist left Samaria, where the fields were ripe for harvesting, and journeyed southward. Why he was going he knew not; like a ship in war time he went under sealed orders, knowing only that at the right time and place he should learn what his orders were. Such unquestioning obedience to the will of God is wonderful.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Scriptures bear Witness of Me

The Meaning of Our Golden Text. When Jesus was accused of Sabbath-breaking because He cured the man at the Pool of Bethesda on that day, He defended His action, and among His words were these, as given in the Revised Version: Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me. And then He added: Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life. Jesus' thought seems to have been that the Jews reverenced the Scriptures, and studied them carefully and minutely because they thought that by keeping the exact law they would find eternal life, whereas the Scriptures (the Old Testament) bore witness of Him and prepared the way for His coming who was the true source of spiritual life. The Jews were careful not to break the Sabbath as they understood the command of the Scriptures, but they cared not for Him who was Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus needed not to counsel them to search the Scriptures. They knew them from childhood. "Men of the Book" they were afterwards called by the Arabs, because of their wonderful knowledge of the Old Testament. What they needed was to read their Scriptures aright, to understand them, to see that they pointed to Him who was sent to reveal the Father to men.

The treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia was reading the prophet Isaiah as he rolled along in his chariot on his return journey from Jerusalem, where he had been to worship. He was reading the prophecy that points forward to the coming and suffering of the Redeemer. He had not seen and heard Jesus during His ministry on earth, he had not listened to the apostles as they proclaimed the Christ, he had no printed Gospels to make plain to him the meaning of what he read. He needed some one to explain the words. Very gladly he welcomed Philip and listened to him as he began from this Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. Thus he was brought to the One who is the source of Spiritual Life, and led to accept Him and His gift. He had searched the Scriptures to the right purpose.

Shut up with the Bible. When Nicholas I became Emperor of Russia, his first task was to put down a formidable sedition among the aristocracy of his realm. Many nobles were suspected of guilt and thrown into prison. One, who was innocent, was by nature a man of fiery temper; his wrongful arrest infuriated him, and he raved like a wild animal. Day after day, brooding over

his treatment, he would stamp shrieking through his cell, and curse the emperor, and curse God. Why did He not prevent this injustice?

A clergyman visited him in his cell and left a Bible, which he begged him to read. As soon as the writer was gone, the angry nobleman kicked the Bible into a corner. What to him was the Word of a God who let tyrants abuse him? But the terrible loneliness and desperation of his situation at last drove him to read the Book. He read it because he could do nothing else, and then he became interested and began to study it, and to commit whole chapters to memory. The story of the Saviour's life and death totally changed him. He saw himself a fellow-sufferer with the Christ who was unjustly accused and slain.

Revengeful rage gave way, and the spirit of the martyr took its place. The shadows of wrong and death vanished in the new light that shone upon him from beyond. The company of a Book—the one Book in all the world that could have done it—had given the proud noble another heart.

At his trial he was unable to prove his innocence, and was sentenced to death. When the jailer's key unlocked his cell, instead of the messenger of death whom he expected, the Tsar of Russia stood before him. A conspirator's intercepted letter had placed the innocence of the suspected nobleman beyond question, and the Tsar had come to make what amends he could.

Since then the life of the nobleman has passed away, but the fruits of his devout fidelity and kindness among his fellowmen, the hospital he built for the sick and friendless, and the very Bible he was shut up with in his distress, still bear witness to a consecration that was worth all its personal cost. Adapted from *The Youth's Companion.*

II Search the Scriptures

We Need Two Commands. Not only do we in these days need to be told that we must read the Bible aright, but, unlike the Jews, we need to be counselled even to read the Bible. There are mosques where the Mohammedans have the whole of their sacred writing, the Koran, read daily by thirty relays of priests, and there are multitudes of Mohammedan youths who can repeat the whole Koran from memory,—six thousand verses. What must be said about the knowledge of the Bible in our Christian land? College professors have shown, by actual tests, that the majority of students on entering college are appallingly ignorant of the Scriptures. An instructor in Cornell University is so used to this ignorance that he says he was only "mildly surprised" at the result of a reference to Bismark's remark that socialism should be regarded by the propertied classes as the hand-writing on the wall. A student whose standing ranked among the first inquired the origin of that expression, the hand-writing on the wall. The professor asked the class; one suggested that Socrates saw letters of blood on the wall of his cell, another thought it had something to do with Nebuchadnezzar, and a third suggested Beelzebub. No one had heard of Belshazzar's feast, and when he read aloud to them the fifth chapter of the book of Daniel, they listened, he said, as to an impressive and novel story.

A bright young girl had shown great knowledge of history and biography in a game at an evening gathering, but when Biblical characters were selected she was pitifully ignorant. When Moses was the character chosen and various things were told her about him, she could not understand to whom they referred. At last she was informed that "He was on a high mountain for a long time communing with God," but still she could not tell who was meant. When they told her she exclaimed, "Why, I did not know that Moses wrote the Sermon on the Mount!"

On the other hand, there is an encouraging side to the present use of the Bible. Never before were so many thousands of students studying the Bible in colleges as now, never were there so many evening Bible classes among industrial workers; and never was so much money spent in printing and distributing the Bible in distant lands. The time is near at hand when boys and girls will be as ashamed of ignorance of the Bible as they now would be of ignorance of addition and multiplication.

Good Counsel. A student in one college was confessing to me that he did

not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but in answer to my question he admitted that he had never spent a connected hour in weighing evidence on this subject. In Australia I noticed that they often found the gold dust on or near the surface, but that as a rule the nuggets were discovered by digging. In the gold districts of our western states the largest output of gold is the result of a cyanide process in connection with which the ore is crushed and by various processes the precious metal is extracted. So to-day the men who are bringing the richest treasures from the mines of God are those who are giving themselves to the most thorough-going processes of meditation. There is no symmetrical, constant, healthy development of the spiritual life apart from reflection upon the truth of God. The absence of this explains why so many Christians are not growing, but rather standing still or going back spiritually.

Have a favorable place or meditation. Have a regular time for meditation. Give sufficient time to meditation. Use the Bible as the basis and guide in meditation.

Without the Bible this process may make one morbid, melancholy, selfish and fanatical, whereas with the Bible it is a most fruitful exercise. The question may present itself, what topics would you suggest for meditation? Every one ought to ponder frequently the facts concerning his own sin and concerning the sufficiency of Jesus Christ to meet all his need. If a man does not do this he is likely to become proud and self-sufficient, and one might spend an hour a day for a month on the Scriptural terms which unfold the secret of forgiveness; or the secret of becoming Christ-like; or the secret of becoming fruitful; or the secret of immortal hope. Ponder Christ's claims about Himself. Study meditatively His character. This in itself is a theme which one could never exhaust. Condensed from an article on *Religious Meditation* by *John R. Mott*, in *Northfield Echoes.*

III Missionary Topic Hungering and Thirsting for the Word of God

Eager Hearers of the Word. A missionary in Canada once looked up from his desk where he was writing to see his room filled with Indians. They had entered so quietly that he had not heard them coming. He asked them whence they came. "We came a distance of fourteen nights," they answered, for they reckoned distance by the number of nights on the way. "We have the Great Book which we can read, but we can not understand." He asked them what missionary had taught them to read, and they replied that they had never seen a missionary. They lived in the Hudson Bay region, hundreds of miles away from the nearest missionary station, but their hunting grounds adjoined those of Christian Indians, and from them they had heard about the Great Book. "They read and explained it to us," said these men, "and last winter we all learned to read, every one in our village." The missionary could scarcely believe that they had learned to read without a white teacher, but when he opened the book, which they had obtained from an agent of the Hudson Bay Company, he found their words were true, they could read easily and correctly. Like the Ethiopian treasurer, they wanted a guide, and they had traveled a distance of fourteen nights over the snow to find one.

From a medical mission in India two men were sent home cured. Before they went they begged for a copy of the Gospels which had been read to them at the hospital. They could not read, to be sure, but they had thought of a way by which they could have it read to them. "When the cloth merchant comes to buy our webs," they said, "we will gather the villagers, and put the book into his hand, and say, 'Read us this book, then we will talk business,' and when the taxgatherer comes, we will say, 'Read us this book, and then we will settle our taxes.'"

They received the coveted Book, and went their way. Three years afterwards Dr. Chamberlain, who was at the head of the medical mission, in the course of his travels came at sunrise one morning upon the village where these two men lived. News of his coming had reached them, and he found the whole population gathered under their council-tree awaiting him. His two former patients came to greet him, and to tell him that through the reading of the Book every one in the village was ready to give up his idols if only some one would come and teach them. As they spoke they handed him their largest idol

and said to the image: "Be off with you, we have found a better God. Jesus is now our Saviour."

With these Indians in the Hudson Bay region and these Telugus of India, contrast the millions of boys and girls in the United States and in England who do not have to learn to read or to get some one to read to them this Great Book, and who do not have to journey hundreds of miles over the snow or wait for years for some one to come to them in order to have the book explained, and who yet do not appreciate their opportunities and are not eager to know the Book and to make its teachings the guide of their conduct.

What One Bible Society has done. In the summer of 1907, a handsome memorial column of red granite was unveiled in Wales in the presence of all the Sunday-schools of the district. This is the inscription on the monument: "In memory of Mary Jones, who in the year 1800, when eighteen years of age, walked from here to Balga to secure from the Rev. Thomas Charles a copy of the Welsh Bible. This event was the means of starting the British and Foreign Bible Society."

This Society was the pioneer of all societies whose object is the printing and distribution of Bibles. In 1904 it celebrated its centenary, and a most interesting account was published of what it had accomplished during those hundred years. One hundred and eighty million volumes of the Scriptures were distributed, printed in nearly four hundred different languages, at a total expenditure of more than seventy million dollars. These vast figures represent uncalculable results. Hundreds of salesmen, called colporteurs, most of them Christian natives of the lands where they work, travel about from place to place with the Bibles. They sell them when possible at cost, and when the people are too poor to buy even at this price they sell them for less or give them away. Payment is often made in swords, sandals, straw hats, eggs, dog's teeth, or whatever the natives consider valuable.

There are also many hundred Bible Women engaged in the work, chiefly in those countries of Asia where women are kept secluded. Then there are local agents in the various towns, and the work is aided by all the missionaries.

How Some Chinese are expected to know their Bible. The China Inland Mission, in Hunan, holds "Bible Knowledge Examinations," as "China's Millions" informs us; and it would be interesting to know how many of "America's Millions" could pass such examinations creditably. An outline of the work expected is given six months in advance of the test, and copies of the Mandarin Bible are the prizes given to those who pass it successfully. One such outline called for the memorizing of twenty-six passages of Scripture, among them the ten commandments, Psalms 1, 8, 32, 51, and 103, and the 13th Chapter of First Corinthians; summaries of several books of the Bible, as of the Book of Jonah and of the Gospel of Mark; and a full account of the trial, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

SENTENCE SERMONS

There is no book that will repay time spent on its pages as will the word of God. *F. B. Meyer.*

The sweet pleasure and satisfaction found in sitting down alone to read the Bible is evidence of being a Christian. *Mary Lyon.*

I speak as a man of the world to men of the world; and I say, Search the Scriptures! *John Quincy Adams.*

Let us live our Bibles: do not discuss them so much; put a bit more in at the living. *Gipsy Smith.*

The whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever-growing influence of the Bible. *William H. Seward.*

We can never think a text dull or small after we have once looked deep into its depths. *Phillips Brooks.*

One of the greatest obstacles with which we have to deal with in our Bible-study is the idea that the Bible can be studied somehow without any effort, at any time, without any knowledge. *Charles Foster Kent.*

A man's goings are established of Jehovah. Psa. 37.23.

Young man, my advice to you is that you cultivate an acquaintance with and a firm belief in the Holy Scriptures—this is your certain interest. *Franklin.*

When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth. John 10.43.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold
Wondrous things out of thy law. Psa. 119.18.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

The Ethiopian Treasurer was a model scholar. He was eager to read the Word of God, eager to have it explained to him, and eager to heed what he had learned. After he understood the teaching of Jesus Christ, he was eager to be baptized and thus acknowledge himself His disciple.

In the highest part of Hongkong during three months of the year a damp fog settles and deposits a blue mold over everything that is not used daily. Would there be mold on your Bible if you were there? You know that Jesus was very familiar with the Word of God. If He needed to know the Scriptures, do you think that you can get along without knowing them? Will you not follow the advice of Ruskin, and make it the first morning business of your life to understand some portion of the Bible clearly, and your business to obey it in all that you do understand?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

There was great joy in the city of Samaria when Philip had healed the lame and palsied, and had proclaimed to the people the Christ. In the midst of his successful labors there, he was suddenly sent by an angel of the Lord on a long journey southward, down to the way that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. Nothing doubting that he was divinely sent, although he knew not why, Philip at once obeyed. Somewhere on the road he met an Ethiopian, a eunuch of high position under his queen, who was returning from a visit to Jerusalem where he had been to worship in the temple. The Ethiopian was reading aloud as he rode along in his chariot, and Philip was impelled by the Spirit to join him, for this was the purpose of his journey. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" he asked with the freedom of Eastern life. "How can I except some one shall guide me?" asked the Ethiopian in return, and, eager to receive help, he invited Philip to sit beside him in his chariot. The passage which he was reading is in our 53d chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet foretells the suffering and death of the Christ. "Of whom is the prophet speaking," he asked, "of himself, or of some other?" With these words before him for his text, Philip told his eager listener about Jesus; we can easily believe that he told how Jesus fulfilled the prophecy, and how by His death He had provided a way of salvation for all who accepted Him. The Ethiopian believed, and when they came where there was water he asked to be baptized. The chariot halted at his command, and Philip baptized him.

Nothing more is known of the Ethiopian except that he continued on his way rejoicing. Philip was next found at Azotus; he preached in all the cities through which he passed till he came to Cæsarea.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The need of prepared hearers as well as of prepared preachers.
2. The study of the Bible to-day. See "The Bible in the American College," by Professor H. T. Fowler, in the *Outlook*, Jan. 19, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What have the followers of Jesus been called before this lesson in Acts? (1.15; 2.44; 5.14; 6.1; 9.13, 30.) 2. When were they called Christians? (Acts 11.26.) 3. Where was the Plain of Sharon? 4. For what was it noted? (Song of Sol. 2.1.) 5. Where were Lydda and Joppa? 6. What earlier miracle had been wrought through Peter? (Lesson IV.) 7. To whom did he ascribe the power? (Acts 4.9, 10.) 8. Why did not these miracles in Lydda and Joppa lead to his persecution? (Verse 31.) 9. What was the effect of each? (Verses 35 and 42.) 10. Tell the story of the raising of the daughter of Jairus. (Mark 5.35-43.) 11. What are some of the rewards promised to those that fear the Lord? (See Subject-Index of your Bible, under *Fear of God, Advantages of.*)

LESSON XI—MARCH 14

ÆNEAS AND DORCAS

Read Acts 9.31-43. Commit verses 40, 41.

Golden Text

And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. Acts 9.34.

LESSON TEXT Acts 9.31-43.

31. So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified: and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied.

32 And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. 34 And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38 And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. 39 And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and raised her up: and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord. 43 And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

31. *So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace.* This is the only mention of the church in Galilee.—*Being edified.* R. V. M., *builded up.* See Acts 4.11. The church made progress in Christian virtues.—*Walking in the fear of the Lord.* Living with reverent loyalty to the Lord's commands.—*The comfort of the Holy Spirit. Comforter* is one of the names for the Holy Spirit. John 16.7.

32. *Went throughout all parts.* "Like a commander of an army he went about inspecting the ranks" (*Chrysostom*).—*Saints.* The Greek word means literally *the holy ones.* It is Paul's usual term for the disciples.

33. *Æneas.* A Greek name.

34. *Jesus Christ healeth thee.* See Acts 4.10; Psa. 103.2, 3.

35. *They turned to the Lord.* There was general acceptance of Jesus as the Christ throughout this region.

36. *Tabitha...Dorcas.* Tabitha is the Aramaic and Dorcas the Greek word for *gazelle.*—*Full of good works.* Devoted to good works.—*Almsdeeds.* Deeds of charity.

37. *In those days.* When Peter was at Lydda.

39. *The widows.* Probably those whom Dorcas had aided.—*Coats.* The tunics, or undergarments.—*Garments.* The loose outer robes fastened by a girdle.

40. Compare with this miracle wrought by Peter Elisha's restoring the Shunamite's son to life, 2 Kings 4.32-37, and Christ's raising of Jairus' daughter, Mark 5.35-43.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

34. *Arise, and make thy bed.* In both of these miracles Peter's endeavor to assimilate his action to his Master's is plain. He remembered how a palsied man had been brought to Jesus, and been bidden, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." The similar sufferer that Peter healed was already in his house, but the apostle tries to get as near his Lord's fashion of working as he can, and so he says, "Arise, and make thy bed." The commandment was not only intended to demonstrate to the bystanders and to confirm to the patient the reality of the cure, but it was a touching token of how the apostle's memory had gone back, and how he pleased himself by making even a small detail in his work as like Christ's as he could.

The same intention is equally obvious in the other instance. Peter remembered how our Lord had cleared a death-chamber of noisy, professional wailers, and so he put forth the true mourners from the upper room where Dorcas was lying dead. He remembered the very Aramaic words with which Jesus had raised Jairus' daughter, which are preserved to us in the Gospel which, in some sense, is supposed to be his: and again, he pleased himself, in a naive and innocent fashion, by copying their very sound, and for that purpose availed himself of the Jewish, rather than of the Greek name of the dead woman. Thinking of *"Talitha cumi,"* he said to her *"Tabitha cumi,"*—the change of one letter. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Last Sheaves.*

34. *And straightway she arose.* We have come to believe too many things which at first seemed beyond belief, to be hastily turned from any thing which brings to us reasonable credentials. There have been too many surprises in our time to warrant a careless unbelief. The scientific method and spirit are alone proper. To settle it beforehand with ourselves that certain things can not be done is not the road to knowledge. The unusual is not of necessity the difficult. The quality of a miracle is in its strangeness, not in the force which it needs. It requires no more wisdom or skill than a hundred things to which we are accustomed. *Alexander McKenzie,* in *The Divine Force in the Life of the World.*

39. *Showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made.* Imagine a political economist computing the value of such a life as that of Dorcas! He views men in masses; considers the economic well-being of society on a large scale; calculates what is productive of the greatest good for the greatest number. To him the few coats and garments made for a few poor people would be an item in the world's well-being scarcely worthy of being taken into the reckoning. To the astronomer, lifting his clear eye to the order of the stars, this planet is but a speck. To come down from the universe to the thought of a tiny earth is a fell descent; but to descend to the thought of a humble woman working at a few garments, were a fall indeed.

Human intellect, as it rises to the great, neglects the small. The Eternal mind condescends to the small; or rather, with It there is neither great nor small. It has divided the rings of the earthworm with as much microscopic care as the orbits in which the planets move: It has painted the minutest feather on the wing of the butterfly as carefully as it has hung the firmament with the silver splendor of the stars. Great and small are words which have only reference to us.

Judging the matter by the heart, ascending to the heart of God, there is another aspect of the subject: great belongs only to what is moral—infinitude and eternity are true of feelings rather than of magnitude, or space, or time. The mightiest distance that mind can conceive, calculable only by the arrow-flight of light, can yet be measured. But tell us, if you can, the measure of a single feeling. Find for us, if you can, the computation by which we may estimate a single spiritual affection. When the world has passed away, "he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The true infinite, the real eternal, is love. When all that economist, historian, philosopher can calculate, is gone, the love

of Dorcas will still be fresh, and living, in the eternity of the illimitable mind. *F. W. Robertson,* in *Footsteps of the Flock.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE.

34. *Make thy bed.* Bedsteads like ours have never been in use in Palestine. In the better houses there is a raised platform at one end of the sleeping room on which the bed is made, but in the poorer homes the bed is made on the floor of the living room. The bed consists of a mat, or rug, or sheep-skins sewed together, or a mattress made by stuffing a quilted coverlet with wool. On rising, the bed is made by rolling it up. In the Greek the word bed is not expressed and the words στρῶσον σεαυτῷ, translated *make thy bed,* means literally, *spread for thyself;* the palsied man is directed to do for himself what others have long had to do for him.

36. *Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas.* Perhaps Tabitha was never called Dorcas, but it was not unusual for the Jews to have both a Hebrew (Aramaic) and a Greek name, especially in a seaport town like Joppa, where there were both Jews and Greeks.

37. *They laid her in an upper chamber.* See the burial custom, page 44. Lydda was so near that there was evidently time for Peter to come before nightfall, and it was not uncommon to bury the dead at night if death occurred after sunset. Whether her friends expected that Peter would restore her to life or whether they only felt the need of his presence and sympathy, can not be known. It was customary to have hired mourners, but here the widows whom Dorcas had aided took their place. The upper chamber was the guest chamber, built on the roof of the house.

43. *Simon a tanner.* To touch a dead animal made a Jew "unclean" according to their laws, and tanners therefore were held to be unclean and were ordered to have their dwelling apart from others. "The world cannot get along without tanners," said the rabbis, "but woe unto him who is a tanner." A woman whose husband became a tanner after her marriage to him, could obtain a divorce. The house at Joppa pointed out as that of Simon is by the seashore, and may have been built on the original site. In the court yard there is a spring of fresh water which would have been needed for his work. That Peter was willing to live at Simon's house proves that he was no longer troubled by rabbinic scruples.

Traditional House of Simon the Tanner

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The visit of Peter and John to the Samaritans is the first recorded apostolic journey. The care and supervision of the churches, scattered here and there during this period of rapid extension, fell to the apostles, for the various communities needed counsel and instruction. Luke gives a typical picture of an apostolic journey made by Peter. The two cities of Lydda and Joppa lay in the district traversed by Philip on his preaching tour from Azotus to Cæsarea, but they were so near Jerusalem that the gospel had probably been preached here before Philip's coming. The stories of healing and of raising from the dead which constitute our lesson show how certain Peter had become of the power of God working through him, and how many were led to believe and join themselves to the disciples. The date of this journey is uncertain. It may have been 39 or 40 A. D., or even as early as 37 A. D. The preceding chapter records the conversion of Saul and his reception by the Church at Jerusalem.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Judea, Galilee, and Samaria are the three divisions of Palestine west of the Jordan, named in verse 31 in the order of their importance, not of their location.

The portion of the Maritime Plain between Carmel and Joppa was called the Plain of Sharon, famous for its flowers (Song of Solomon 2.1). Joppa was the seaport of Jerusalem, the place to which the cedars of Lebanon were brought in rafts for Solomon's temple. It is now called Jaffa, and is connected by a railroad with Jerusalem, thirty miles away. Lydda "was nigh unto Joppa," eleven miles away by the railway. Here there are ruins of a church built in honor of St. George, the saint and martyr about whose name so many legends have grown, who is said to have been born and buried here.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In India it is a common sight to see a feeble old man, his body emaciated and covered with ashes, his hair matted with grease, leaning on a trident, and carrying on one arm a leopard skin, and accompanied by his "*chela*," or disciple, also begrimed with ashes, who carries a begging-bowl. They approach a group of men, and the old man sinks painfully to the ground and points a shaking finger at the passers-by. One of them drops a coin into the bowl and kneels reverently before the old man, who places his hand on his head, then raises it toward heaven and mumbles a prayer and once more lets it rest on the head of the man before him. The man then rises and goes on his way rejoicing, for he believes that good luck will follow him; has he not been blessed by a *Yogi*, or Hindu saint? What a contrast between such saints and such superstition and the saints at Lydda and Joppa who blessed others with their good works! The followers of Christ are called saints here, as earlier they were called brethren or believers, and later were called Christians. Paul begins his letter to the Romans by saying "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called an apostle...to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints," and *saints* is a favorite name of his for all those who believed in Jesus Christ.

For Older Pupils. The events of our lesson occurred when the followers of Christ had peace throughout Palestine. The persecution that followed Stephen's death ceased for a time. Saul, the chief persecutor (Acts 8.3), had become himself a Christian. Probably there was also another reason for the cessation of hostilities, as many have been pointed out. Between 37 and 41 A. D. Caligula (Caius Cæsar) was the Roman Emperor, and Josephus in his "Antiquities" has recorded the trouble which he occasioned the Jews. They were so occupied with this, that they had no time to concern themselves with the growth of the apostolic church. Caligula ordered Petronius, the proconsul of Syria, to erect his statue in the temple at Jerusalem, and dedicate it as to a god. Petronius came to Ptolemais, and there "ten thousands of the Jews" came to beseech him not to carry out his purpose. Here, and again at Tiberias, where Petronius went with his followers, the Jews declared that they would die before they would see their laws transgressed and their temple thus dishonored. Throwing themselves on the ground before him, they affirmed that they were ready to be slain, but they would never yield in the matter. The war which seemed imminent between the Jews and the Romans was averted by the opportune death of Caligula.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Religion is Service

How God may be served. God is not served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, said Paul in his speech to the Athenians, seeing he himself giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things. During all the ages this great truth has been forgotten or neglected by a great host who have honestly been striving to serve God. Men have shut themselves up in cloisters and thought that in this way they were serving Him. By service we increase the welfare, the well-being, of others; shall we think in any way to increase the well-being of the all-powerful, all-sufficient I AM THAT I AM?

The only way in which we can serve Him has been plainly told us by Jesus in His description of the Last Judgment: "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom pre-

pared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was in prison and ye came unto me." To the question of the righteous, When? comes the answer of the King, "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." We serve God by serving men. It has been rightly said that one's wealth hereafter is the good he has done here to his fellow-men, that when he dies people may ask, "What property has he left behind him?" but the angels will ask, "What good has he sent before him?" The good sent before her by Dorcas has been a force impelling others to emulate her example from that day to this.

The World's True Servants. Let each seek his neighbor's good, was Paul's counsel to the Corinthians. This is why we are in the world—to help one another. It was not the publican that Jesus condemned, but the Pharisee who strove to fulfill the law in its minutest regulations, and scorned his fellow-men. It was not the priest, who passed by on the other side, but the Samaritan who stopped to serve, whose example we are told to follow.

One of the newspapers in France has been in the habit of taking a vote at different times for many years upon the question of what Frenchman has done the most for France. Until recently Napoleon has always headed the list. But in the last vote he was only fourth, and Pasteur, the great scientist whose discoveries have done so much for humanity, was the first. The standard by which the people judged of human achievements has changed.

Two ragged street urchins stood one day before the window of a picture store in London, and suddenly one of them cried out exultantly, "Look, Jim, look!" "What is it?" Jim asked, and the little fellow answered, "Why there he is. That's our earl." It was the photograph of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, in truth the earl of the poor and the oppressed. The motto of his family is "Love; Serve," and nobly did he live up to this motto. What Lord Shaftesbury did for the poor of London, for the insane, for pauper children, for chimney-sweeps, for seamstresses and shoe-blacks, and for all kinds of philanthropic works it would take long to tell. "When I think that I am growing old, and that I have not long to live," he said toward the end of his life to one who was telling him of the wrongs of working-girls, "I hope it is not wrong, but I can not bear to die and leave the world with so much wretchedness in it." Pauper and prince alike came to do him honor when he died. A laboring-man, who had a piece of crape fastened on his sleeve, was heard to say in a choking voice, "Our Earl's gone. God A'mighty knows he loved us, and we loved him. We sha'n't see his likes again."

Go where one will, one may find poverty and wretchedness,—for, as Jesus said, the poor ye have always with you—and everywhere there is need of true noblemen with Lord Shaftesbury's spirit of service for others. There is need in every household of the establishment of "Welfare Work"—that modern name for a modern service carried on in great industrial establishments whereby means are devised for increasing the comfort and happiness of the workers—and every Christian member should help carry on the work.

II Humble Services.

Doing what can be done well. What is great service and what is little? Does not the service of a Dorcas who does the one thing she can do well, and makes coats and garments for the poor, equal in God's sight the gift of millions from the man whose money making is the one thing that he can do well? Who shall say what are the major and what the minor ministries of life? Perhaps most people if asked which is the stronger, wood or steel, would answer "steel," unless they considered it too foolish a question to answer at all, and yet experiment has proved that, weight for weight, wood is the stronger of the two. No metal can be made into a hollow rod that will be as strong as a bamboo rod unless it exceeds it in weight. Just as faulty often is the estimate of what constitutes a great service.

There are so many who covet the opportunity of doing a great service, and yet wholly overlook the multitude of small services they might render.

"God gives us all some small, sweet way
To set the world rejoicing."

Let us not fail to make the most of that small way. True service lies not in the magnitude of the deed but in the spirit of the doer.

In Training for Greater Service. "So interesting are great events and great deeds that we are apt to despise the realm of little things. I strongly believe that the kingdom of Lilliput is more important than that of Brobdingnag, for attention to small duties is the only path to great achievement." With these words Dr. Howard Kelly begins a long article in the *Youth's Companion* in which he gives the history of how the cause of the spread of yellow fever was discovered. Dr. Walter Reed became a surgeon in the United States Army and spent the first eighteen years of his medical life in remote places on the western frontier, where he had neither facilities nor time for scientific work, but he never lost his great ambition to accomplish something which would relieve human suffering. In 1900, yellow fever broke out among the American soldiers at Havana, and Doctor Reed was placed at the head of a government commission to investigate the disease. He found that a certain species of mosquito carries the disease from one to another, and by exterminating these little pests he overcame the scourge. But in his devotion to his work Doctor Reed undermined his own health, and had not strength to survive a surgical operation which he underwent after his return to this country. "The result of Dr. Reed's life was a great achievement," says Doctor Kelly, "but the lesson of his life lies in the little things of every day occurrence. Whatever his hand found to do he did it with all his might, although for nearly twenty years he expended all his energies and his brilliant abilities on the trivial services which most of us despise. His life on the frontier was the most arduous and least distinguished that an American physician can lead, but it was the training acquired in that hard school which taught him a self-reliance and a power of resource without which he would never have accomplished the great service when the moment for it came."

A Lesson from the Koran. The Mohammedans, who believe many beautiful things about angels, have in one chapter of their Koran the story how Gabriel, as he waited by the gates of gold, was sent by God to earth to do two things. One was to prevent King Solomon from the sin of forgetting the hour of prayer in exultation over his royal steeds, the other to help a little yellow ant on the slope of Ararat, which had grown weary in getting food for its nest, and which would otherwise perish in the rain. To Gabriel the one behest seemed just as kingly as the other, seeing that God had ordered it.

Silently he left
The Presence, and prevented the King's sin,
And helped the little ant to entering in. *F. W. Farrar.*

Grand Missions.

Oh, think not, if thou art not called to work
In mission field of some far distant clime,
That thine is no grand mission. Every deed
That comes to thee in God's allotted time
Is just the greatest deed that thine could be,
Since God's high will appointed it to thee. *Anna Temple.*

III Missionary Topic Full of Good Works

A Christian Virtue. On the Kansas prairie a farmer took a claim and put up a small, rough cabin for his family. But sickness soon came upon him, and all winter long he suffered. In the spring he died. What would become of his wife and her three little children? After the doctor's bill was paid she had no money left with which to pay for help, and she had no relations to whom she could appeal for aid. Unless a crop was raised she could not hold her claim.

One morning she looked out of her window and saw her fields alive with men and boys and teams. From near and far they had come, and soon they

were busily at work with their plows and harrows and corn-planters. When night came eighty acres were planted with corn, and with a promise that they would come again and harvest her crop the tired workers drove merrily away.

After the sugar-cane harvest on the island of Formosa the stubble-fields were set on fire, as was the custom, to prepare them for another planting. The fire spread and attacked the houses of the only two Christians in all that section. Their owners were away, and one of the houses burned to the ground. The other Chinamen rejoiced, and said that happened because the Christians had left the religion of their fathers and no longer offered sacrifices to their ancestors. One day they saw with astonishment a great troop of men coming, bringing with them bamboo poles, wood, bricks and tools. They laid their things down by the ruined house and began to build another. What could this mean? The Christian Chinese in a neighboring village had learned of the misfortune of their fellow-Christian, and had come to "help him bear his burdens." In a few days the house was ready. The heathen Chinamen had never seen a deed like that before, they said, and they could not understand it.

In civilized America and in heathen China the spirit of Christian service is the same as that of Dorcas at Joppa. The true follower of Jesus is full of good works.

Good Works of the Fourth Century. Julian the Apostate, who was emperor of Rome from 361 to 363 A. D., is especially celebrated for his attempt to overthrow Christianity and restore the ancient paganism. The morals and benevolent institutions of Christianity he desired to keep, but his attempt to graft them on to heathen beliefs and practices were as futile as would be the attempt to graft a living branch on to a dead limb. In a famous letter of his to the Galatarch of his time he counsels him to spend the fifth part of the income of the province on the poor who obey the heathen priests, if possible to erect hospitals in every town, and "no longer allow the Christians a monopoly of good works."

What the Christians were doing in this same century is thus told by Lecky in his "History of European Morals." A Roman lady named Fabiola, in the fourth century, founded at Rome as an act of penance, the first public hospital, and the charity planted by that woman's hand overspread the world, and will alleviate to the end of time, the darkest anguish of humanity. Another hospital was soon founded by St. Pammachus; another of great celebrity by St. Basil at Cæsarea in Cappadocia. St. Basil also erected at Cæsarea what was practically the first asylum for lepers. *Xenodochia,* or refuges for strangers, speedily arose, especially along the paths of the pilgrims. The Council of Nice ordered that one should be erected in every city. In the time of St. Chrysostom the Church of Antioch supported three thousand widows and virgins, besides strangers and sick.

A Modern Dorcas. A Chinese diplomat, when asked what surprised him most in America, answered, "State care of the insane, the Y. M. C. A., and the lady in Chicago." "The lady in Chicago" is Miss Jane Addams, who, besides founding and conducting Hull House, lecturing, and making books, finds time to be superintendent of streets and alleys in her ward. *The Missionary Review of the World.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

God bases His rewards, not on conspicuousness of service, but on fidelity to opportunity. *G. Campbell Morgan.*

Surely woman should bring the best she has, whatever that is, to the work of God's world. *Florence Nightingale.*

No man has come to true greatness who has not felt, in some degree, that his life belongs to his race, and that what God gives him is given for mankind. *Phillips Brooks.*

Sainthood for you and for me is living up to the conception we have of the Christ-life. *Garfield Williams.*

We must secularize saintship by sanctifying the secular life. *P. Carnegie Simpson.*

Religion does not call on us for many mighty works, nor, indeed, for any

mighty works whatever; it calls for good works, for whatever is true, honest, pure, and lovely. *W. L. Watkinson.*

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Matt. 5.16.

A woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates. Prov. 31.30, 31.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Dorcas was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did—not which she dreamed of doing. Perhaps we imagine that we are full of good works because we think about them and plan to do them; the question is, do we do them?

Like Dorcas, use for the good of others whatever talent you have. If through doing humble deeds in the Master's service you are fitted for larger service, rejoice when the opportunity comes, but if it never comes, rejoice in your minor ministries, and continue to do whatever your hands find to do.

What is your responsibility in regard to the suffering around you? Says Dr. Marcus Dods: "Your opportunities of helping in social matters will vary with the position you are called to fill; but given the opportunity, it will weigh heavily on your conscience in later years if you have done little or nothing by your own practical endeavors to lighten the burden of the poor, to introduce justice and mercy into the relations of employer and employed, to replace squalor, disease, and hopelessness by comfort, health, and enjoyment of life; in a word, to bring in the kingdom of God on earth."

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

For the Church throughout Judea and Samaria and Galilee there was peace for a time, persecutions had ceased, and not only did the followers of Jesus increase in numbers, but they grew in character, for they lived in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort and strength given them by the Holy Spirit.

Two remarkable miracles are recorded which were wrought at this time through Peter. He came to Lydda, in the Plain of Sharon, and finding there a man who had been palsied eight years, he told him that Jesus Christ made him whole and bade him arise and roll up the mattress on which he had been lying. The palsied man obeyed, and those who saw him were led by this evidence of the power of Christ to turn to Him.

The report of Peter's presence and work at Lydda reached Joppa, a larger town a few miles away on the coast. The Church there was in great sorrow, for one of their beloved members, a woman named Dorcas (or Tabitha) who was devoted to good works, had died. Tenderly they laid her body in an upper room and sent for Peter to come to them. When Peter arrived he was taken to this room. There were many widows present, mourning for Dorcas, and they showed him garments which she had made. Sending them all away, Peter kneeled down and prayed, and then said, "Tabitha, arise." At once she opened her eyes and sat up. Peter called back her friends and presented her alive to them. So astounding a miracle as this led many to believe in the Lord.

Peter tarried at Joppa for a time longer, living in the house of Simon a tanner.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE DISCUSSION

1. Faith Cures.
2. Service. See "Jesus Christ and Social Problems," by Dr. Lyman Abbott, or article by William Allen White in the *American Magazine* for Oct., 1906.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Review the first nine chapters of the Acts. 2. Write an analysis of each lesson in three statements. Lesson 1 may be thus analyzed: 1. The introduction to the Acts, vv. 1-5; 2. The ascension, vv. 6-9; 3. The message, vv. 10, 11. Lesson 11: 1. Symbols of the gift, vv. 1-3; 2. The gift itself, v. 4; 3. The effect of the gift, vv. 5-11.

REVIEW

Golden Text for the Quarter

They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. Acts 8.4.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE FIRST NINE CHAPTERS OF THE ACTS

(A Suggestion. The quarter's work may be pleasantly and profitably reviewed by a general exercise for the entire school. Choose seventeen pupils from different classes and let each one commit to memory one of the sections below. Then let them stand together before the school and recite in order what they have learned. After every four recitations have a solo or a song by the school.)

Lesson I. In the introduction to the Acts Luke addresses Theophilus, to whom he had addressed his Gospel. In that earlier treatise he had told many things that Jesus began to do and teach before His ascension—how He showed Himself alive to the apostles many times during the space of forty days after His crucifixion; how He spoke many things concerning the kingdom of God; and how He bade them wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father through Him, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now, contiuues Luke, when the disciples were met with Jesus for the last time they asked Him if He would at this time restore the kingdom to Israel. "It is not for you to know times or seasons," Jesus replied, and promised them power through the Holy Spirit, bidding them be His witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Then He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. As they stood gazing two men in white apparel stood by them and gave them the assurance that Jesus should come again "in like manner" as He had departed.

From the Mount of Olives, where the disciples had parted from Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem, and in that upper chamber the apostles with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and other women and with His brethren, engaged in urgent prayer. And in those days when one hundred and twenty were assembled, Peter proposed to choose some one to fill the place of Judas, whose fate Luke records. Two names were suggested; lots were cast after a season of prayer for guidance, and Matthias was chosen.

Lesson II. On the day of Pentecost the disciples were all assembled in one place, when suddenly there came a sound like a mighty wind and a sight like tongues of fire resting on each one, and all were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Jews in Jerusalem who came together were amazed to hear these Galileans speaking in "other tongues"; from the most distant lands they came, and each heard in his own language the mighty works of God declared.

In amazement some of the Jews said the disciples must be filled with new wine. Then Peter arose and spoke for them all, affirming that this wonderful event had been foretold, that God had raised Jesus from the dead, the One whose mighty works the Jews had witnessed and whom they had crucified, and that His resurrection had been foretold by David.

Lesson III. Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God, Peter continued in his discourse to the assembled Jews, and what they saw and heard was the result of His promised gift of the Holy Spirit. Ye may know for a surety that God has made Him Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified, Peter cried, and they were pricked in their heart, and cried out, "What must we do?" "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus

Christ, for to you and your children is the promise," Peter exhorted them, and about three thousand obeyed.

Many wonders were wrought by the apostles. Many of the disciples sold their possessions and gave to others as they had need, and the brotherhood of believers lived in peace and unity, praising God and giving Him thanks for all things.

Lesson IV. As Peter and John were going into the temple at the hour of prayer, a beggar, who had been lame from his birth, asked them for alms at the Gate Beautiful. "Silver and gold have I none," said Peter, "but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth walk." Then he took him by the hand, and the lame man arose, and leaping and praising God entered the temple with them. A wondering crowd followed them afterwards into Solomon's Porch and Peter addressed them, telling them that he and John had not wrought the miracle by their own power, but faith in Jesus the Christ had made the man whole, the One whom they had denied and killed and God had raised from the dead.

Peter urged the Jews about him to repent of what they had done in ignorance and many of them accepted Jesus as the Christ, so that the number of believers became five thousand. While they were talking to the people Peter and John were seized by the priests and the captain of the temple and put in prison.

Lesson V. The next day Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin and asked by what power or by what name they had healed the lame man. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, and there is no other name under heaven that is given among men wherein we must be saved," boldly answered Peter. Marvelling at such courage, and unable to say anything against the miracle because the lame man was there as evidence, they could only threaten the apostles and let them go, charging them not to speak in the name of Jesus. "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard," declared the apostles.

The apostles returned to their own company, and all united in praise and prayer, petitioning for power to speak God's word with boldness.

Lesson VI. The apostles continued to give their witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and the believers continued to live together and have possessions in common. There was no one among them that lacked, for those who had lands or houses sold them, and brought the money to the apostles to distribute to those in need. One of those was Barnabas, who sold a field and brought all the money to the apostles. Then deceit and covetousness and desire of praise filled the hearts of two disciples, Ananias and Sapphira, and they kept part of the money they received from the sale of a possession, and gave the rest to the apostles as though it were their all. Retribution quickly followed, and each died and was buried within a few hours. Great fear came upon the whole church.

The apostles wrought many miracles and believers were constantly added to the number of the faithful followers of Christ.

Lesson VII. The high priest and Sadducees were consumed with jealousy. They had the apostles imprisoned, but when they sent to bring them before the Sanhedrin on the morrow the prison was found locked and the keepers at the door, but the prisoners had escaped. News was then brought that the apostles were at that moment teaching the people in the Temple. The officers brought them before the Council. "Did we not charge you not to teach in the name of Jesus, and behold you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching," they said. "We must obey God rather than men," Peter replied: "Jesus whom you crucified God has raised from the dead and exalted to be the Saviour, and we are His witnesses."

So enraged were the Sadducees that they wished to slay the apostles, but Gamaliel, an honored doctor of the law, advised them to let the apostles alone, for if their work were of men it would be overthrown, but if it was of God they could not overthrow it, they would be found fighting even against God. They listened to Gamaliel and, calling back the apostles, who had been sent out during their deliberations, they had

them beaten and released. The apostles departed, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. The number of disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and even a large number of the priests accepted the new faith.

In the brotherhood of believers discord arose because the widows of the Grecian Jews were neglected while those of the Hebrews were cared for. The apostles asked to have seven men "full of the Spirit and of wisdom," appointed to attend to such matters, and they chose Stephen, Philip, and five others.

Lesson VIII. Stephen at once became prominent in the work. Certain synagogue members disputed with him, and, failing to gain the victory, they induced men to accuse him of speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God, and so stirred up the people and the scribes that they haled him before the Sanhedrin and there charged him with speaking against the holy place and the law. His face shining like that of an angel, Stephen began his defence. He rehearsed the glorious history of the covenant people, and then suddenly accused his hearers of resisting the Holy Spirit as their fathers had done, of murdering the Righteous One whose prophets their fathers had persecuted. So enraged were they that they gnashed on him with their teeth, but looking calmly upward he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." With one accord they rushed upon him, dragged him without the city, and stoned him there. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" cried Stephen as he "fell asleep." The witnesses who cast the first stones had laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul, and "Saul was consenting to his death." Then there arose a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, in which Saul was the chief actor, and all save the apostles were driven away into the regions of Judea and Samaria.

They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Philip, one of the seven deacons, proclaimed Christ in the city of Samaria and many believed. Among the number who were baptized was Simon, a noted sorcerer who beheld in amazement the miracles wrought.

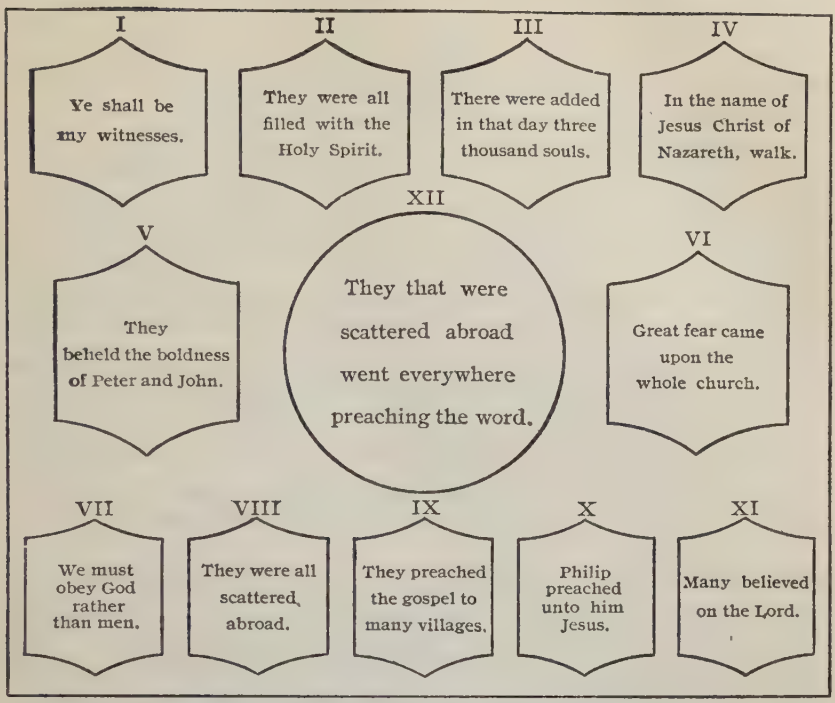
Lesson IX. When the apostles at Jerusalem learned that to the Samaritans the gospel had been preached, they sent Peter and John to learn the situation. These apostles prayed that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit and their prayer was answered. When Simon saw that the apostles laid their hands on the people and they received the Holy Spirit, he offered to purchase their power with money. Peter indignantly spurned his impious offer, and bade him repent of his wickedness. On their return to Jerusalem the apostles preached in many Samaritan villages.

Lesson X. To Philip came a divine message bidding him go toward Gaza. He obeyed at once, and was directed to approach the chariot of an Ethiopian, the treasurer of the queen, who was returning from a visit to Jerusalem where he had been to worship. He heard the Ethiopian reading aloud a prophetic passage from Isaiah, and he asked him if he understood it. "How can I, except some one shall guide me?" asked the latter in his turn, and besought Philip to join him. Philip did so, and beginning with that scripture passage he preached unto him Jesus. When they reached a place where there was water the Ethiopian begged Philip to baptize him, and then went on his way rejoicing. Philip returned to Cæsarea, preaching the gospel in the cities through which he passed.

Lesson XI. The conversion of Saul brought peace to the church throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria. At Lydda Peter in the name of Jesus Christ restored to strength Æneas, a man who had been palsied eight years. When Dorcas, a woman renowned for her good works, died at Joppa they sent for Peter, and he restored her to life. The miracle became known and caused many to believe on the Lord.

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

This diagram contains the Golden Text for the Quarter, Lesson XII, and a sentence from each of the eleven lessons which emphasizes its thought.


I
Ye shall be my witnesses.
II
They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.
III
There were added in that day three thousand souls.
IV
In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.
XII
They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.
V
They beheld the boldness of Peter and John.
VI
Great fear came upon the whole church.
VII
We must obey God rather than men.
VIII
They were all scattered abroad.
IX
They preached the gospel to many villages.
X
Philip preached unto him Jesus.
XI
Many believed on the Lord.

Have this diagram copied on the board before the school session. Call for the Golden Text for the Quarter. Then write on the board the numeral I and ask who were the chief persons in the first lesson. Write *Jesus and the Disciples* after that numeral. Explain that in lesson I we learned of a great promise. As you write the words *A great Promise* in the second column, inquire what was the promise. Have the sentence in the diagram under the numeral I read, and explain its relation to the Golden Text under numeral XII. Then call for a practical lesson truth from some scholar to whom has been assigned the thought given in the list below. When all the lessons have been reviewed in this way, you will have written on the board these two columns:

	Chief Persons	Chief Facts
I.	Jesus and the Disciples	A great Promise
II.	The Holy Spirit and the Disciples	A great Fulfilment
III.	Peter and the three thousand	A great Revival
IV.	Peter and the Lame Man	A great Cure
V.	Peter and John	A great Boldness
VI.	Ananias and Sapphira	A great Punishment
VII.	The Apostles and the Sanhedrin	A great Deliverance
VIII.	Stephen and Saul	A great Martyr
IX.	Peter and Simon	A great Sin
X.	Philip and the Ethiopian	A great Lesson
XI.	Æneas and Dorcas	Two great Miracles

Practical Lesson Truths

These may be assigned in advance to eleven scholars. Or they may be written or reproduced with printed letters, on eleven large sheets of paper, the sheets fastened together and hung where they can be plainly seen. Turn over each sheet after it has been read by the school when called for. By fancy

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lettering or by drawing pleasing borders the sheets may be made attractive. Instead of these truths a sentence sermon may be given from each lesson.

Lesson I. Though Jesus has ascended to the Father, we may live in a companionship with Him as helpful as that enjoyed by the disciples while He was on earth.

Lesson II. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is as real in this day as on the memorable day of Pentecost.

Lesson III. What shall we do? Repent and be baptized. How shall we live? Continue stedfast.

Lesson IV. We have gifts of more value than silver and gold; let us give them.

Lesson V. Let us so live that others may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

Lesson VI. To desire to seem good, is well, to desire to be good is better, and to strive to be good is best. Let us cultivate a keen, true sense of truth and honor.

Lesson VII. We are in danger of obeying man rather than God, or thinking more about what others will say than about how God will judge.

Lesson VIII. The same help that Stephen had when he faced his enemies may be ours in every trouble.

Lesson IX. Let us not be like Simon Magus, professors of Christianity who fail to "work much at it."

Lesson X. We need to study and understand and obey God's word.

Lesson XI. Every one has some talent that he can use for the good of others.

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

These questions may be copied and given the pupils the Sunday before, to be answered at home in writing and the answers read and discussed in class on Review Sunday, or part of the questions may be answered orally or in writing during the class period.

I. In His last talk with the disciples, where did Jesus tell them they were to bear witness to Him?

II. What took place at Pentecost?

III. How many people were led by Peter's sermon to accept Jesus as their Saviour?

IV. What did Peter say to the lame man who begged for alms at the Beautiful Gate? What did He do for him?

V. When the Jews ordered Peter and John not to preach in the name of Jesus, what answer did they make?

VI. What did Barnabas do for the poor Christians? What did Ananias and Sapphira pretend to do? How were they punished for their deceit?

VII. When Peter and John were brought before the Council of the Jews and accused of disobeying their order not to preach in the name of Jesus, what answer did they make?

VIII. What did Stephen say as he was stoned to death?

IX. What did Simon in the city of Samaria think he could buy with money?

X. What question did Philip ask the Ethiopian on the way to Gaza? What was his answer? What did Philip teach him?

XI. What man did Peter restore to strength? What woman did he bring back to life? For what was she noted?

Write from memory the sentence sermons you have learned.

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. Who wrote the Acts? 2. What is the purpose of the book? 3. What was the great commission of the apostles? 4. How were the disciples driven away from Jerusalem? 5. What was the result? 6. Name in the order of their importance three great leaders of this period. 7. What miracles are ascribed to Peter? 8. How did Peter show his courage? 9. What was the character of Stephen? 10. What did Philip accomplish? 11. How far had the gospel spread during the time covered by this quarter's lessons? 12. What is the most help-

ful lesson you have learned during this quarter? 13. Write from memory the sentence sermons you have learned.

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

After picturing the scene of each lesson, let pupils give the title and golden text or sentence sermon learned, and answer a few questions in regard to the lesson.

I. I see a crowd of people standing on a hillside, their faces upturned and eyes fixed on the sky.

II. This scene is in a room where there are many people. I hear a rushing noise, and see a flashing light. Now all the people are talking excitedly.

III. The place is the same and the people are the same as in the last scene, but all are listening to the words of one man. Now great crowds of people are being baptized.

IV. Two men are walking towards a temple. A beggar holds out his hand. The men stop before him. Now the beggar is standing, now he is leaping about. In the next scene these same men are now standing where there are many columns and they are surrounded by a great crowd of people.

V. There is here a group of dignified-looking men, and before them stand the two men we have seen before. After a long talk the two men leave.

VI. A man comes in and lays a bag of money at the feet of a group of men. Another man comes in and does the same thing. Suddenly this man falls, and men carry him out. A woman enters and she, too, falls and is carried out.

VII. Here there is a prison with guards at the door. Officers approach, enter, and go away. Now we are in a temple and the same officers have come and are leading away with them two men who have been speaking to a crowd. Soldiers are now beating these men.

VIII. A man is talking. Now all is excitement. Men are dragging this man along the city streets, they pass through the city gate and on a little ways and then stop. Two men throw off their outer coats and lay them down before a young man and then seize huge stones and hurl them at the man they have brought here who is now kneeling in prayer. Other stones crash through the air and the man falls.

IX. Two men are holding their hands over the heads of others and praying. A man who has been looking on approaches and says something to these chief men. They look very indignant, and one of them speaks quick and angry words to him.

X. This is a scene on a dusty road. A man is riding along in a chariot and reading. A traveler comes up and speaks. He enters the chariot and rides beside the reader and talks earnestly. The chariot is now stopped and the two men are approaching a pool of water.

XI. In the first scene a man is speaking to another who is lying on a bed. The sick man arises and the people around look astonished. In the next scene a man enters a room, where there are many weeping women. Again the scene changes, and this time the women look very happy as they surround this man and a noble looking woman.

(Have the scrapbooks, that have been prepared according to the suggestion on page 15, brought to class and shown, and commend the work.)

ESSAY WORK FOR THE OLDER PUPILS

1. How the commission given by the risen Christ to His disciples was fulfilled during the years covered by the first quarter's lessons.
2. The gift and the fruits of the Holy Spirit.
3. The miracles wrought by the disciples.
4. The perils from without and from within the new Christian community.
5. The first Christian martyr.
6. A characterization of Peter, John, Barnabas, Philip, and Stephen.
7. Peter's discourses.
8. The Book of the Acts.
9. Write a brief analysis of each lesson.

(Have the histories brought to class, which have been written according to the suggestion given on page 15, and have the best ones read aloud.)

LESSON XIII—MARCH 28

TEMPERANCE LESSON

Read Proverbs 23.29-35. Commit verses 29, 30.

Golden Text

At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Prov. 23,32.

LESSON TEXT Prov. 23.29-35

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions?
Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause?
Who hath redness of eyes?
30 They that tarry long at the wine;
They that go to seek out mixed wine.
31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
When it sparkleth in the cup,
When it goeth down smoothly:
32 At the last it biteth like a serpent,
And stingeth like an adder.
33 Thine eyes shall behold strange things,
And thy heart shall utter perverse things.
34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea,
Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
35 They have stricken me, *shalt thou say,* and I was not hurt;
They have beaten me, and I felt it not:
When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

29. A series of questions, answered in the next verse.—*Woe.* Margin, Hebrew, *Oh!*—*Sorrow.* Margin, Hebrew *Alas!* The Hebrew words are interjections, not nouns.—*Contentions.* "The brawling and strife to which drunkenness leads" (*Deane*).—*Wounds without cause.* Drunken men do not need a cause for their fights.

30. *Go to seek out.* "There is a touch of sarcasm in this; the word elsewhere used of diligent search after knowledge is here used, as if ironically, of the investigations of connoisseurs in wine, meeting to test its qualities" (*Plumptre*).—*Mixed wine.* Perhaps mixed with spices or with opiates.

31. *When it is red.* The usual color of the wine of Palestine.—*When it sparkleth.* "Literally, when it gives its gleam (the term rendered *gleam* is the ordinary word for *eye*), that is, is full of life" (*Toy*).—*Goeth down smoothly.* A. V., *moveth itself aright.* See Song of Solomon 7.9.

32. The wine which fascinates like a serpent (verse 31), is also as poisonous as a serpent.

33. Seemingly a reference to delirium tremens.—*Perverse things.* "What ridiculous incoherent nonsense men will talk when drunk" (*Henry*)!

34. *As he lieth down in the midst of the sea.* Expressive of the reeling, helpless condition of the drunkard.—*Mast.* "The Hebrew word occurs only here in the Old Testament, and its meaning, if it be a real word, is unknown; it is similar to the term for *line, rope,* but can hardly mean mast (which is a mere guess). It is simpler to adopt the expression 'in a violent storm' (see John 1.4), which requires no great change in the Hebrew" (*Toy*).

35. A soliloquy of the drunkard awaking from his stupor.—*When shall I*

awake? "The time seems long before the drunkard fully awakes from the slumber after his debauch, in order to return to the orgies of yesternight" (*Wordsworth*).

SUGGESTIVE WORDS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

29-35. It is a startling picture of a drunken man. See how intemperance profanes man's body-nature, opening the way for diseases, rags, gutter, brutishness. See how intemperance profanes man's society-nature, involving loss of reputation, esteem, confidence, good-will. See how intemperance profanes man's mind-nature, involving loss of talent, memory, reason, judgment, coherence, skill, caution, shrewdness, resoluteness. See how intemperance profanes man's heart-nature, involving loss of delicacy, conscience, truthfulness, aspiration, manliness, religion. *George Dana Boardman,* in *Ethics of the Body.*

32. *At the last.* Every ladder has two ends. If you carry one, thinking only of the front end, you may break a window or some one's nose with the other. There are always more than one thing to think about. The present pleasure may be linked with future pain. The reckless sowing of wild oats may mean a harvest of pain and shame and bitterest self-reproach. How significant are these words in Proverbs about the peril of wine-drinking, at the last! These are words the devil never uses. At first laughter and exhilaration, sharper wit and swifter pulses; at the last, dregs and degradation. Who would dare begin to drink if he could see first that end of the ladder which is in the ditch? Let a repulsive drunkard offer a young man his first glass of wine, and what chance is there of his taking it? But with a crowd of good fellows, or at a dinner, it is quite different. Is it? That is where it begins. If you know of any person ruined by drink, you know of some one who once was as pure as you. If you begin, you may be as terrible a wreck as he. "At the last" need never be said of you, however, if you will refuse, if you will conquer attractive temptation at the first. How thankful, then, you will be at the last! *Maltbie D. Babcock,* in *Forward.*

32. *It biteth like a serpent.* A bartender complained because he had to rub congealed drops of sticky beer off the bar. "But if I let them remain," he said, "they rot the wood."

"They rot the wood, do they?" fiercely repeated the beer bibber. "Then, what in the name of common sense do they do to my stomach?" "It is beyond me to tell," replied the manipulator of drinks. "Of one thing I am confident, and that is, that man's stomach is made of cast iron. Elsewise how could he withstand the amount of beer that he pours into it? Let me show you something." He placed a piece of raw meat on the counter and dropped it into a small measure of imported liquor. In five minutes the meat had parted into little pieces, as though hacked by a dull knife.

It is not surprising that beer drinkers are held by life insurance companies to be extra hazardous risks. *Arkansas Searchlight.*

33. *Thy heart shall utter perverse things.* A young man of a fine family, of splendid gifts, was going down fast through strong drink. His friends had pleaded with him, but he had taken their warnings as an insult. One day one of them, who was a court stenographer, was sitting in a restaurant, when the young man came in with a companion, and took a seat at the table next to him without seeing him. He was just drunk enough to be talkative about his private affairs, and on the impulse of the moment, the stenographer pulled out his note-book, and took a short-hand report of every word he said. The next morning the stenographer copied it all out, and sent it around to the young man's office. In less than ten minutes the latter came tearing in with the exclamation, "What is this, anyhow?" "It's a stenographic report of your monologue at the restaurant last evening," his friend replied, and gave him a brief explanation. "Did I really talk like that?" he asked faintly. "I assure you it is an absolutely verbatim report," was the reply. He turned pale and walked out. He never drank another drop. *Herald and Presbyter.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

30. *They that tarry long at the wine.* Among the Egyptian papyri there is

one as old as 3,600 B. C., on which we find among other moral aphorisms a warning against wineshops. "My son," it says, "do not linger in the wineshop; thou fallest on the ground, thy limbs become weak as those of a child." *F. W. Farrar.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is thought that the Book of Proverbs was combined in one book after the Exile, but most of its sayings are very old, and many of them are the words of Solomon. In the book itself different portions are ascribed to different authors. The opening words of the book say: "The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel"; the first verse of chapter 25 states: "These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah copied out"; the first verse of chapter 30: "The words of Agur the Son of Jakeh, the oracle"; and of chapter 31: "The words of King Lemuel; the oracle which his mother taught him." Section 22.17 to 14.22 is called the Little Wisdom Book. Notice that in the Revised Version wide spaces separate it from what precedes and follows. It contains "The Words of the Wise" (22.17)—whether Solomon or not can not be determined—to a young man whom he calls "my son."

Have not I written unto thee excellent things
Of counsels and knowledge,
To make thee know the certainty of the words of truth,
That thou mayest carry back words of truth to them that send thee?

he questions. Among his excellent counsels is a warning against drinking wine which forms the topic of our temperance lesson to-day.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Many years ago there was a Sunday-school class of bright boys, ten-year old boys, who lived in comfortable homes, whom everybody expected to grow up into noble men, for their fathers and mothers were Christians and they were eager to do everything possible for their boys. What was the use of their Sunday-school teacher talking to such boys about the danger of drinking liquor? Of course such boys would never drink. If they had lived in miserable hovels and had drunken parents there would have been some reason for warning them. But their teacher, Dr. A. E. Dunning, has told a sad story of what became of them. When they were fourteen they formed a boy's club. It was a secret club, and no one who did not belong knew what they were doing. They hired a room in which to meet, and they thought they would be more grown up if they had cigars to smoke and liquor to drink. Then it was not long before one of the boys came to his teacher and told him he had been drinking and his mother was so worried about him. He was sure he could stop drinking any time, and he promised never to touch it again. But he broke his promise, and went from bad to worse till one day he left home and no one ever knew what became of him. Another boy drank and stole, a third died from drink when still a young man. Ought that teacher to have warned those ten year old boys against intoxicating liquor?

For Older Pupils. A youth almost grown to manhood had a strange dream, so the story runs. In his dream he talked with the richest man in his town. "You know my house and grounds," said the latter to him. "Well, I am tired of caring for them and I wish you would take them." Then a judge of renown came to him and said: "It is time for me to leave the bench, for I am weary of the work. Come and take my place." Not long afterwards a skilled physician appeared on the scene and sought the youth, "I am getting on in years and my work is too great a strain for me, I would like to have you step into my practice." Then in his dream a tattered man, a drunkard whom he had long known by sight, shambled up to him and said: "My days are about over, and when I fill a drunkard's grave I want you to come along and take my vacant place, at the saloons and in the gutters."

The choice offered this youth in his dream is the choice offered by the writer by the twenty-third chapter of the book of Proverbs to "my son."

Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
And guide thy heart in the way,

counsels the sage, and then he dissuades from the career of the unwise by drawing his graphic portrait of a drunkard.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I At the First

Moderate Drinking. No drunkard ever deliberately planned at the first to drink to excess. He saw no harm in the first glass of wine now and then. He probably even argued that alcohol was a stimulant which is needed. Of course he would drink only moderately. Wine

> When it sparkleth in the cup,
> When it goeth down smoothly,

has great attraction for some persons. There is a temporary exhilaration though no permanent benefit from its moderate use, and there are jollity and good fellowship often where it is enjoyed.

> Stay till I bring the cup with Bacchus crowned,
> Then with a plenteous draught refresh thy soul
> And draw new spirits from the generous bowl,

says Hector's mother to her hero son.

Intoxicating liquor has its uses, too. Some physicians prescribe it for certain ailments. Soldiers sorely wounded on the battle field have been kept alive by a drink of brandy till surgeons could give them aid. This is the best possible picture of wine drinking "at the first." Proverbs gives another picture "at the last." Is the risk worth while? Who can tell when moderation will change to excess, when the occasional glass will become the habitual glass, or whether or not he may have inherited from some remote ancestor a thirst that will not down once it is awakened?

Prophylaxis is derived from two Greek words meaning *to guard before,* and the term is used for the art of preventing disease. Total abstinence is the prophylaxis for the inebriates' disease. Just as in the olden days the Israelite owner obeyed the law in Deuteronomy and built a battlement around his flat-roofed house, thus making it impossible for him to fall off, although he may have been perfectly sure that such a precaution was needless and he would never be in danger of falling, so may every young man and woman well build a battlement around his social life by signing a pledge never to drink intoxicating liquor, although he or she is perfectly sure that there can be no danger of falling.

Two Questions. A superintendent of a coal mine succeeded in having a club house built for the use of the miners to keep them away from the saloons. On the night of the opening he addressed them and said: "You all know the purpose of this club house. It is meant for your pleasure, but not for your destruction. Let me ask you two questions. Does any of you know among friends and acquaintances one who has become incapacitated for work, or has made his family unhappy and then died and left them in want because he would not drink whiskey?" The men looked at the speaker rather defiantly, but answered "No." "Good, and now the second question. Can not each of you count at least one for every finger who has become wretched and sick and worthless, who although really a good fellow has made his family most unhappy, and has at last died miserably, merely because he could not moderate his desire for whiskey?" "Yes." "Well, then, this is all, may every one take the thought of this short speech to heart." The words were never forgotten, and the club without its bar made a great reformation in that community.

Two Boundary Lines. Between the State of Ohio and the State of Kentucky the boundary is established and defined. Any one crossing from one state into the other would know it, if not otherwise, by the state of his wet feet. But between the State of Ohio and the State of Indiana, while the boundary is equally well established, it is not defined at all to the traveler. Any man might easily pass from one state into the other without knowing that he had crossed the line, and without intending to do so at all.

And so likewise in the moral life. Between abstinence and temperance, not

only in the matter of drink, but in all questions, there is a boundary line both established and defined. No one will ever have any difficulty in perceiving this line. A blind man can locate it. But between temperance and excess there is no such line at all, and a man may pass from the country of temperance into the country of excess without any intention of doing so, with indeed the firmest purpose to do nothing of the kind. It is the invisibility of its boundaries that makes the moral danger of residence in the land of temperance indulgence so much greater than the Spartan citizenship of total abstinence. Men do not mean to go over from temperance to excess. As a matter of fact, I suppose that almost no one ever deliberately goes over the boundary into excess, meaning to do so. He only gets over because the boundary line which he has crossed was unmarked and undetectable. *Robert E. Speer,* in *The Marks of a Man.*

Decide aright at the First. A few years ago a young man went to Chicago where he had a position with good prospects. He drifted into companionship with other clerks who thought only about having a "good time." Their evenings were spent together in amusements in which the young man saw no harm, social drinking, quiet card playing, smoking. A friend visited him from his old home and observed the way in which he spent his leisure. Then he had a talk with him. The *Youth's Companion* tells the story:

"Look here, old fellow, I want to have a straight talk with you," he said; "what have you got out here in Chicago? A clerkship with a chance. What does the chance depend on? Education and friends. What is your education? Nothing but a high-school training, and most of that forgotten. Who are your friends? Young men who flash other people's money. Now what are you going to do? Run to seed and end worse than you began, or fit yourself for a useful future?

"If you wish to fit yourself, join an evening school, study part of the time out of working hours, and spend your Sundays as you ought to spend them. Purify your life, broaden your understanding, and you will make something of yourself. But if you prefer to stay as you are, take another drink, pass around the cigars and be a 'jolly good fellow' with the boys."

The young clerk thought it over. His cigar went out and dropped from between his fingers. He saw two futures—one full of ease but ending in failure, the other fraught with hardships but leading to success. He knew the choice was his. "I thank you, old fellow," he said, at length. "I needed it."

At the end of a week the clerk was a member of an evening class and had selected his church. He gave up drinking, smoking, cards and clubs, and began to use the public library and to get back something of his old-time interest in books. He was surprised to see that he had dropped out of his vapid life as easily as he entered it. To-day he is loved and respected by all who know him. "Who would give a thought to me to-day if I had made the wrong decision?" he said, a little while ago. That is a question which every young man can well afford to ask himself. There is only one answer to it.

II At the Last

Look not on the Wine when it is Red.

Inflaming wine, pernicious to mankind,
Unnerves the limbs and dulls the noble mind,

was Hector's reply to his mother who would renew his spirits by a draught of wine. "Far hence be Bacchus gifts! Let chiefs abstain," exclaimed the hero.

Proverbs gives a vivid picture of the excessive drinker at the last. His words, his complaints, his brawls and bruises, his redness of eyes and bleared visage, the strange things his eyes behold and the maudling words his tongue speaks, the pitiable wreck of a man, all are clearly portrayed. I can stop any time, there is no harm in an occasional glass, are the words of the man who drinks moderately at the first. When I awake sufficiently from the stupor I will seek the drink again, are the words of the inebriate at the last. "Every moderate drinker could abandon the intoxicating cup if he would," said John B. Gough; "every inebriate would, if he could."

Our word *intoxication* comes from two Latin words *in,* in, and *toxicum* (from the Greek), a poison, the kind of poison in which arrows were dipped.

Intoxicating liquor is a poison that robs the one who drinks to excess of his control of the will. He finds too late that he is enslaved by drink, drink he must at whatever cost. "What I would that I do not; but what I hate, that I do" describes his condition exactly, as the inebriates in the asylum at Binghampton admitted to Doctor Lyman Abbott when he read to them without comment the seventh chapter of Romans. Look not on the wine when it is red, counsels the writer of Proverbs. To parley with temptation is to play with fire, says Bunyan.

The Way out. "There is nothing more hopeless than the ineffectual remorse of a man who drinks and wishes he didn't," says the President of Leland Stanford University. "If you don't want to do a thing, then don't do it. The only way to reform, is to stop, stop, stop! And go at once and do something else." The only sure way is never to begin. Having begun, President Jordan's counsel "to go at once to doing something else" is of vital importance. What a wonderful record the Salvation Army has had in reforming drunkards! The secret of their success lies partly in the fact that they never give up, never despair of saving the man, and never desert him in his need, partly in the fact that they give him at once something else to do, and chiefly in the fact that they seek to save not only the physical but also the spiritual wreck of manhood left. They lead him to the Power from whom he derives strength to fight his battle and conquer.

A Drunkard's Warning. The man was a skilled artisan, and an inventor whose patented devices had again and again brought profit to his employers, but his mental working power was gone, and his hand had lost its cunning. Strong drink, that years ago made him its slave, had left him useless when hardly past his prime. With one of his neighbors, he conversed freely a little while before his disappearance, and this is the substance of what he said:

"I wish the young could realize how many useful things the world is waiting for, and could be taught to look for them. In an age of progress like this the most successful workers are those who find new and better ways. Encourage every sign of young ingenuity. Tell a boy that any talent to think and do will bless the world, if it does not make his fortune. A lucky thought is a prize everywhere. It is a God-given gift. So is the brain that originates it. Tell him that.

And tell him to leave stimulants and narcotics alone, and save his brain. I blame nobody but myself that I did not mind this caution when I was young; though it seems strange that not a soul ever warned me.

At nineteen I was on the highroad to success, and my skill was in quick demand; but I fell into fast company, and drank—drank till it became a habit to drink. I never shook off the curse till it ruined my faculties. Look at the wreck it has made of me. It is too late now. I can not think to a point, and my hand can not make a perfect draft."

Every such example repeats once more to the youth of the land, "Your faculties are God-given gifts. Conquer temptation, and keep them whole." *Youth's Companion.*

III Missionary Topic Fire-Water

The Superior Red Man. The great curse of the Indians is fire-water. Their love for strong drink is their greatest weakness.

When America was discovered, the Indians had no intoxicants. They were content to drink the water from the streams and lakes. But the white man introduced his spirituous liquors among them, and many and grievous have been the evils that have followed.

Mr. Evans and other missionaries insisted on all Indian converts becoming total abstainers from all intoxicating liquors. In some places this met with fierce opposition from unprincipled white men who had been thriving on the trade of selling fire-water to the Indians. They were furious when this trade fell off, and tried by various schemes to get the Christian Indian drunk.

On one occasion four Indians from Muncey Town went to the white settlement to trade. The trader tempted them to drink some whiskey, but they refused, saying they were Christians. Knowing the road they would take home, he put a jug of whiskey by the side of the Indian trail at the edge of a sloping bank,

and hid himself in the bushes beneath, thinking to enjoy the sport of seeing them drink when all alone. At length they came along in Indian file. Suddenly the first one stopped and exclaimed:

"Lo, the evil spirit (the devil) is here."

The second on coming up said, "Yes, we smell him."

The third shook the keg with his foot and said, "Of a truth we hear him."

The fourth Indian, coming up, gave the keg a kick, and away went the firewater, tumbling down the hill.

The four then went on their way, like brave Christian warriors, leaving the mortified white heathen to take up his keg and drink the devil himself. *Edgerton R. Young,* in *The Apostle of the North.*

The Guilt of the English-speaking Races. Not only frequently, but wellnigh invariably, the ship that bears one or two missionaries to convert the Africans carries also thousands of gallons of rum. During a recent period of four years thirty million gallons of strong drink were shipped from England and America to help in the work of civilizing Africa! Missionaries assert that their worst enemy is not witchcraft, native depravity, licentiousness, nor race-old superstitions, but rum from their own Christian land. One expresses the general conviction, "I would rather face heathenism in any other form than the liquor traffic in Africa." Native religions encourage the use of liquor. Drunkenness is a common part of religious festivals, and is considered the result of possession by the spirit or god of the drink. The powerful liquors from civilized lands not only utterly demoralize the natives, frequently to the extent of depopulating whole districts, but reinforce native religions and superstitions against Christian appeal.

A. S. White in "The Development of Africa" graphically epitomizes the deplorable situation: "Islam, or Arab influence, advances with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other—as it apepars to us. Christianity or English influence, advances with the sword or paper treaties in one hand, and the Bible or a case of gin in the other—as it appears to the native mind. It is no use quarreling with the comparison. It is a just and faithful one." *Wilson S. Naylor,* in *Daybreak in the Dark Continent.*

An Educated African's Appeal. I can prove from my own knowledge that all the wars that have been fought by my tribe since the advent of civilization have been brought on by rash action on the part of drinking men. If we have not advanced high in the scale of civilization, neither had we until this fatal liquor was forced upon us, fallen so low as many. We need but an honest helping hand to raise us up to as high a state of culture as was possessed by most of the dark races at a time when the Western Continent was still in the gloom of barbarism.

If the present policy continues, we can not fight as men should against the wrong. The poison is fast doing its deadly work, and in a few years there will be none of us left to resist the oppressors. But our blood will be on their heads, and will cry to Him for vengeance.

We appeal, not for a gift or favor, but for our right. Even as the Americans appealed for their rights and obtained them by heroic measures, so do we claim the right for "freedom to worship God," and to worship Him by sobriety, industry, good-will, and all the Christian graces. Quoted in *Daybreak in the Dark Continent* from an article in the *Century Magazine* by *Momolu Massoquai,* Prince of the Veis, Sierra Leone.

SENTENCE SERMONS

The contemplation of vice is vice. *Arab Proverb.*

Beware of corkscrews; corkscrews have sunk more people than cork-jackets ever saved. *Sir Thomas Lipton.*

One of our highest privileges of manhood is the privilege of not touching what may harm us. *H. Clay Trumbull.*

You will be very little of a man, very little indeed, if you have to resort to tobacco and liquor to add to your blood and conduct that touch of devilishness which you may think is a necessary part of manliness. *A. J. Beveridge.*

If thou wouldest conquer thy weakness, thou must never gratify it. *Penn.*

Even after a shipwreck there are hosts who will seek the sea. *Seneca.*

It takes two centuries to transform the savage into a citizen: let the saloon do its work, and it takes but a single hour to transform the citizen into the savage. *Luther B. Wilson.*

Drunkenness is not only the cause of crime, but it is crime, and if any encourage drunkenness for the sake of the profit derived from the sales of drink, they are guilty of a form of moral assassination as criminal as any that has ever been practised by the braves of any country or age. *John Ruskin.*

Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit. Eph. 5.18.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, is a warning that applies to any temptation. Look not upon it, keep away from it, avoid it, pass it by.

After Dr. Dawson had been preaching against intemperance he said to his hearers: "Perhaps some of you are ready to say, 'You have been telling us about drunkards, murderers, great criminals. We are not drunkards nor criminals.' Who made you to differ? Who gave you the opportunities you have had? Who gave you the shelter of your innocence?" We to whom intoxicating drink is no temptation should pity the one not so fortunate and should safeguard him from his temptation. We are in this our brother's keeper.

The "son" to whom the writer of these words from the Book of Proverbs spoke was still young enough to form a right habit; so are you.

If it is a small sacrifice to give up wine, one should do it for the sake of others, as some one has wisely said, but if it is a great sacrifice one should do it for one's own sake.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Who is it that has woe and sorrow, that is quarrelsome and complaining, that has wounds caused by senseless fights, and redness of eyes? questions the ancient philosopher. Then he answers his question: They who tarry over the wine and try mixed wine. Look not on the wine at all, he exhorts: shun its attractive appearance, its pleasing taste, for however desirable it may seem in the beginning, like the poisonous bite of the serpent and the sting of the adder it produces fatal consequences in the end. He who is under the influence of wine sees and speaks strange things, he has lost his reason and is foolhardy enough to lie down in the midst of the sea or on the top of a mast. The philosopher closes his warning with a picture of a man awakening from a drunken stupor: he has a vague idea that he has been in a quarrel and has been beaten, but he feels it not, and his only desire is to awake sufficiently so that he may "seek it yet again."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Christendom's Rum Trade with Africa. See the *Missionary Review* for June, 1894; and the article by Momolu Massaquai in the *Century*, April, 1905.

2. Remedies for intemperance.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Give an account of the vision of Cornelius. 2. Of the vision of Peter. 3. Of what was said and of what happened at the home of Cornelius, vv. 23-48. 4. Of the apostles' censure at Jerusalem, and of Peter's justification of his course, 11.1-18. 5. What other centurion resembled in generosity the one at Cæsarea? (Luke 7.1-10.) 6. What activities were carried on on housetops? (Josh. 2.6; 1 Sam. 9.25; 2 Kgs. 23.12; Neh. 8.16, 17; Isa. 15.3; Jer. 32.29; Matt. 24.17.) 7. Read the 11th chapter of Leviticus for the law in regard to "clean and unclean" animal food 8. What had Jesus said in regard to ceremonial and real defilement? (Mark 7.15.) 9. What impetuous words of Peter to his Master are recalled by his words in verse 14? (Matt. 16.22; John 13.8.) 10. When did Peter refer to this occasion as a commission given him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles? (Acts 15.7-11.)

SECOND QUARTER

LESSON I—APRIL 4

PETER AND CORNELIUS

Read Acts 10.1-48. Commit verses 13-15.

Golden Text

In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. Acts 10.35.

LESSON TEXT Acts 10.1-20

1 Now *there was* a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of
the band called the Italian *band,* 2 a devout man, and one that feared God with
all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.
3 He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an
angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. 4 And he,
fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And
he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial be-
fore God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is sur-
named Peter: 6 he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the
sea side. 7 And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called
two of his household-servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him
continually; 8 and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to
Joppa.

9 Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto
the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: 10 and
he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into
a trance; 11 and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descend-
ing, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: 12
wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth
and birds of the heaven. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill
and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything
that is common and unclean. 15 And a voice *came* unto him again the second
time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. 16 And this was
done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven.

17 Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which
he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having
made inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate, 18 and called and
asked whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, were lodging there. 19 And
while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men
seek thee. 20 But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting:
for I have sent them.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *A centurion of the band.* The *band* means a Roman *cohort.* The Roman army was divided into legions, each legion into ten cohorts, each cohort into three maniples, and each maniple into two centuries. A centurion was the officer in command of a century, which consisted strictly of a hundred men, but sometimes of only fifty.—*Called the Italian band.* Originally the members were recruited in Italy.

2. *A devout man, and one that feared God.* "This is the regular description in the Acts for the outer ring of God-fearing adherents to the Jewish faith

They were not true 'proselytes'; 'proselytes' were circumcised and bound to keep the whole law (Gal. 5.3). The 'God-fearing' only accepted the creed of the One True God, made varying compliances with Jewish customs, and were admitted to a place in the synagogue" (*Rackham*).—*Gave alms to the people.* To the Jews.

3. *The ninth hour.* Three in the afternoon, one of the Jewish hours of prayer.

4. *Are gone up for a memorial.* His prayers have been heard and remembered; he is about to receive proof of this in the coming of Peter and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Compare John 9.31.

6. *By the sea-side.* The Mediterranean. See Acts 9.43.—The clause *He shall teach thee what thou oughtest to do,* is omitted from the Revised Version; it is believed to have been inserted in King James' Version because of 11.14.

7. *He called.* Campore the centurion's words in Luke 7.8.

9. *The sixth hour.* Noon, the second of the three regular hours of prayer.

10. *Trance.* "A state in which the soul seems to have passed out of the body into another state of being, or to be wrapt in visions; an ecstasy" (*Webster*).

11. *Vessel.* A receptacle which somewhat resembled a great sheet held up by the four corners. "Perhaps the sail of one of those large Western ships in the offing," suggests Dr. George Adam Smith.

14. *Not so, Lord.* Compare Peter's impetuous words in Matt. 16.22 and John 13.8.—*Common and unclean.* See the law in Lev. 11 and Christ's words in Mark 7.15.

15. *What God hath cleansed.* By the very offering of "all manner" of beasts and birds, all were declared clean, and symbolically the offering meant that "God is no respecter of persons," verse 34.

16. *And this was done thrice.* To make the lesson impressive.

17. *Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself.* Peter must have recognized that the vision meant more than the doing away of the ceremonial custom in regard to food, and no wonder he was perplexed as to what might be the far-reaching consequences of the principle symbolically set forth.

19. *The Spirit said unto him.* "God was providing His own commentary on the text: it was the commentary of facts" (*Rackham*).

20. *Nothing doubting.* Unhesitatingly.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

3. *He saw in a vision openly.* The vision was evidently in its form and in its direction the result of previous natural circumstances. The death of Stephen must have had its effect on the apostle's mind. That truth for which he died, the transcient character of Judaism, must have suggested strange new thoughts, to be pondered on, and doubted. Besides this, the apostle was in a state of hunger. In ecstasy, or trance, or vision, things meet for food presented themselves to his mental eye. Evidently the *form* in which this took place was shaped by his physical cravings, the *direction* depended partly on his previous thoughts concerning the opening question of the church. But the eternal truth, the spiritual verity conveyed by the vision, was clearly of a higher source. Here are the limits of the natural and the supernatural closely bordering on each other. *F. W. Robertson.*

15. *What God hath cleansed, make not thou common.* Judea had, to some extent, accepted Christ, but it had not rejected Moses, who forbade social and religious intercourse with the heathen. The separation was complete. It was not a matter of a day, but of centuries. It was worse than Hindu caste. The chasm between the blacks and the whites in this country is as nothing compared to that between Jew and Greek. The touch of the latter was defiling, his food was an abomination to the devout Israelite, and his religion blasphemy. How could the black man and the white man be made one to-day so that they might sit at the same table, so that their sons and their daughters might intermarry, and so that both might drink from the same communion cup at the Lord's table? But he who should propose this in our time would have an easy task compared with the awful problem which confronted Peter. He knew that the Gentile was to be saved. The Old Testament declared it on every page. The Lord Jesus confirmed it. But how should it be accomplished? It was

accomplished. The prejudices and the convictions of ages gave way. The Jew had to haul down his banner before the Gentile, and admit him to the church as a brother. And he who knows what human nature is must admit that no earthly power could have solved the problem in a single generation. Only God could. *J. M. Stifler, The Acts of the Apostles.*

17. *While Peter was much perplexed in his mind, the men that were sent by Cornelius stood before the gate.* There was an affinity, it seems, between the minds of these two men, Peter and Cornelius—a singular, mysterious sympathy. In the scientific world, similar concidences perpetually take place; discoveries, apparently unconnected, without any apparent link between the minds which make them, are announced from different parts of the earth almost simultaneously. No man, perhaps, has been altogether unconscious of mental sympathies, coincidences of thought, which are utterly inexplicable. All that I deduce from this is the solemn awfulness of the universe in which we live. We are surrounded by mystery. *F. W. Robertson.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *An angel of God.* In the writings of "the Fathers," as certain ancient Christian writers are called, are preserved the doctrines and beliefs of the early Church. One of their favorite thoughts was that God assigned to each individual believer a special guardian angel.

6. *One Simon a tanner.* There exist but few family names in the East; in order to distinguish from each other persons bearing the same appellation, various devices are employed, no one rule being always adhered to. A man's name is often coupled with his business or profession. Ekmekji Ahmed, for instance, is Ahmed the Baker. This was common in New Testament times. In Syria a married man is generally distinguished from another bearing the same name by adding that of his son, as Yoosooph Aboo Anton, Joseph the father of Anthony. *Van Lennep,* in *Travels in Asia Minor.*

6. *Whose house is by the sea-side.* See page 116. In Japan the lowest class is that of the *eta,* those engaged in the business of tanning hides, butchering animals, and executing criminals. In the past they have been regarded as outcasts, compelled to live by themselves, and to sound an alarm whenever obliged to enter the villages of other classes so that the people there might avoid contact with them. The feeling against them still persists in some localities.

9. *Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.* The roof of the house was flat, or slightly raised in the center to allow the rain to run off. "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence," was the law given by Moses, Deut. 22.8. This battlement, or balustrade, was often three to four feet high and concealed a person sitting or kneeling on the housetop. There was usually an outside stairway from the street, and also one through the house leading to the roof.

Many were the activities carried on upon the housetop; there corn was dried, linen was hung up, exercise was taken, booths were erected during the Feast of Tabernacles, and there in hot weather sleep was sought. It was especially the place for prayer and meditation, at evening and in the morning and at noontide.

"One is continually reminded of the custom of praying on the housetop when one comes into this country," says Mr. W. E. Curtis, in "To-day in Syria," "for when the muezzin appears in the balcony of the minaret to call the hour of prayer, thousands of the faithful climb to their house-tops, turn their faces toward Mecca, and go through the gymnastic performance which accompanies Mohammedan worship."

13. *Kill and eat.* Their flesh-meat, which is never hung for days, like ours, is put in the great iron cooking-pot whilst the carcass is still warm, as indicated in this command. *James Neil,* in *Pictured Palestine.*

14. *I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.* Some of the animals seen in the vision were regarded by Jews as unclean, unfit for eating, and others as clean, fit for eating, but the clean by contact with the unclean had become themselves unclean, according to the Jewish belief. Levitical law

prescribed what animals could be slaughtered for food, and prescribed also the method of slaughter. How strong this ingrained Jewish prejudice against eating food Levitically unclean is, is shown by the admission of a prominent rabbi of to-day, who has been an active Christian for forty years, that he has never brought himself to touch such food, although he knew he had no reason for not eating it.

Miss Agnes Slack in giving an account of her tour of India in the interests of the World's Women's Temperance Union, recalled an amusing experience in Bareilly. On entering a native home there, she saw a mouse seated on a plate of cooked rice. The food had been placed on the floor preparatory to the noon-day meal which had been interrupted by her coming. Miss Slack stepped forward to drive it away, but the women screamed with horror lest the Englishwoman should touch the purified section of the floor where the food had been placed, and thus render all impure. The mouse, however, could remain and eat from the plate without defiling food or floor.

17. *The men stood before the gate and called.* They called to the porter, whose duty it was to tend the gate or door that led from the street through the arched entrance into the interior courtyard. The oriental house is usually directly on the street, and built around a courtyard. Had they entered instead of standing without and calling, they would have given great offense, for they were Gentiles. See verse 28.

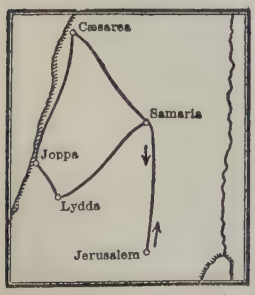
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Gospel had been taught to the hated Samaritans, but they had Jewish blood in their veins and kept the commands of Moses. Philip had taught and baptized the Ethiopian, but Philip was not one of the apostles and his was only a special case. The church at Jerusalem was still essentially Jewish; a new era was dawning, however, and a series of wonderful events changed the narrow Jewish-Christian religion into the universal Christian religion.

The great question which the early church had to settle was the question of the admission of the Gentiles. The way in which the truth was brought home to Peter, and through him to the others at Jerusalem, is the subject of our lesson to-day. In the Acts it follows immediately our lesson of three weeks ago, when Peter was left at Joppa after having restored Dorcas to life.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Cæsarea was the Roman capital of the Roman province of Judea. It was the residence of the governor, or procurator as he was called, and was the headquarters of Roman troops. Herod the Great had built the city on the site of of a small village named Strato's Tower, which lay along the Mediterranean coast at the northern extremity of the Plain of Sharon. He constructed a fine artificial harbor by means of breakwaters (remains of which are still to be seen), and built a great city which he named Cæsarea Augusta in honor of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar.



PETER'S JOURNEYS

Joppa was thirty miles south of Cæsarea, at the southern extremity of the Plain of Sharon. Its modern name is Joppa.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. The Romans called the Jews "Basket-carriers," because a Jew when traveling had a basket, or wallet, slung from his shoulders, in which he carried his food. There were some kinds of meat which he would never touch, because they were forbidden by law, and so he took his food with him when he went on a journey lest he should by chance eat the food that was forbidden, or unclean as he called it. Nor would he eat with a Gentile, for that, too, would make him "unclean." "I will buy with

you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you," says Shylock to Bassanio in one of Shakespeare's plays, and this has always been the spirit of strict Jews. A strict Jew in our own time and country will not use soap in washing dishes, because the fat of pigs has been used in making it, and a dish which has been washed by a Gentile must be rewashed by a Jew before it can be used. The apostles were all strict Jews, you know, and they thought it wrong to eat certain kinds of meat or to eat with Gentiles. In a wonderful way they learned that this belief of theirs was wrong, not according to God's will.

For Older Pupils. In what city did Peter restore Dorcas to life? What is the location of Joppa? Joppa was, next to Jerusalem, the most Jewish town in all Judea, the least controlled by Greek colonists. Pompey had decreed that it should be a free town, Cæsar had declared that it "should belong to the Jews, as it formerly did," and Augustus had given it to Herod the Great's Kingdom. "Joppa was therefore Jewish as no other town on the coast or Maritime Plain," says Dr. George Adam Smith. "Though Joppa was tributary to Herod, he never resided there, or tried to rebuild it, or plant heathen features upon it. Alone of the chief cities of the region it had no Greek or Latin name attached to it. In close commerce with Jerusalem, it was infected with the fanatic patriotism of the latter. To Jewish Joppa Peter came; and we can understand that, as he moved about its narrow lanes, leading to the sea, where his scrupulous countrymen were jostled by foreign sailors and foreign wares, he grew more concerned than ever about the ceremonial law."

Where did the centurion live who was directed in a vision to send for Peter? Where is Cæsarea located? In contrast with Jewish Joppa, where Peter had his vision, Dr. Smith says of Cæsarea, where Peter put in practice the lesson of his vision: "Judean, in the true sense of the word, Cæsarea never was. The gateway to Rome, the place was already a piece of Latin soil. The procurator had his seat in it, there was an Italian garrison, and on the great white temple that shone out over the harbor to the far seas stood two statues—of Augustus and of Rome. It was heathendom in all its glory at the very door of the true religion."

A Centurion

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Privilege of Vision

To whom the Vision comes. Science and reason can not explain spiritual phenomena, but neither can they deny the possibility that the Divine Ruler of a universe crowded with mysteries has special ways by which He touches the soul of man and moves him to action. It was a vision that made Cornelius, the proud Roman, send for Peter, the humble Christian preacher, and it was a vision that made Peter, the exclusive Jew, go to the home of Cornelius, the despised Gentile. Each was promptly obedient to the vision he received, although obedience called for action contrary to natural inclination. Cornelius was a devout man, one that feared God and prayed to God always. Peter was Christ's chosen disciple, His trusted messenger. Each was prepared to receive the vision.

The Lick Observatory is not built on the coast where fogs and mists at times obscure the heavens, but above all such obstructions, on top of Mt. Hamilton, where the air is clear. The vision of truth and duty does not come to the man who dwells always on the levels, where his sight is limited to self and self's

interests with their obstructing mists, but it comes to the man who mounts to the heights where he can hold communion with God and receive His messages.

Others of Peter's Visions. Is Peter's vision on the housetop,—sudden, astonishing, bewildering,—necessarily more divine than those daily compunctions, and hints, and dissatisfactions, and hauntings, of something wrong in his attitude toward men, with which Peter might have been visited every day for weeks past? We have no record of such things, but they are not difficult to conceive. Suppose Peter's mind had in many more common ways gotten turned toward this question of the relation of God to the Gentile, and it had kept vexing him, and he had felt distressed over it. Suppose that it kept returning to his mind in one shape or another until he had been worked up over it, and his whole being stirred and troubled over the question, until at last his mind was moving in an unwonted direction, focussing gradually upon a conclusion quite contrary to his original thought. In what possible respect can we suppose it less divine for God to use such means as these if He chose? At last comes the vision. Is it less divine because of the possible preparation of a slower and more unnoticed sort? Editorial in *Sunday-School Times.*

The Privilege may be Yours. Form the habit of going off by yourself at a fixed hour every day "to see what God has to say to you." Listen and find if there is not some answer, and what that answer is. I have known a man who told me he had such a place of conference in the attic of his store. He went upstairs every morning. No one need see, not one need ask why, or did ask. He came to his "oratory." In the New Testament it is called a "closet." There he could let the downstairs cares drop off; he could and did forget the prices of sugar and flour and candles and the rest; he forgot the mail and the unanswered letters so far that he could ask what God wanted him to do and to be that day. He did ask, and he waited five minutes before he went downstairs, to see what answer came. Sometimes he heard his answer. Sometimes he thought he did not. But I have suspected that he always had it, though he did not always have it in his own way. I think he went down stairs better able to work with God that day than if he had not gone up, and better able to carry out the large laws of life; and this, whether he was conscious or was not conscious of God's reply to his questions. *Edward Everett Hale.*

When the Heavens are opened now. As the signs which advertised God and the unseen world to the outer sense ceased, God and all spiritual things have become more real to the consciousness of the soul. To us the heavens are opened in the revelation of God's great purposes and in the coming to us of great spiritual opportunities. We live in times when some of God's greatest designs are being unfolded. Do we recognize that these are the celestial doorways which God is opening for us? These give us our most inspiring looks into the heavens. He who stands in the presence of one of God's great plans in process of development may well unsandal his feet, for he stands on holier ground than did Moses in the presence of the burning bush, than did Elijah when the glory of the Lord passed before him. From an Editorial in *The Sunday School Journal.*

Why Some Visions are Lost. "Be still and know." How can God give us visions when life is hurrying at a precipitate rate? I have stood in the National Gallery and seen people gallop round the chamber and glance at twelve of Turner's paintings in the space of five minutes. Surely we might say to such trippers, "Be still, and know Turner! Gaze quietly at one little bit of cloud, or at a ray of the drifting moon. Be still, and know Turner!" But God has difficulty in getting us still. That is perhaps why He has sometimes employed the ministry of dreams. Men have had "visions in the night." In the daytime I have a divine visitor in the shape of some worthy thought, or noble impulse, or hallowed suggestion, but I am in such feverish haste that I do not heed it, and pass along. I do not "turn aside to see this great sight," and so I lose the heavenly vision. If I would know more of God. I must relax the strain and moderate the pace. I must be still. *J. H. Jowett,* in *Thirsting for the Springs.*

II The Responsibility of Vision

The Vision must lead to Action. Peter was sitting there pondering this vision "much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean." A new idea came to him. He saw it very vaguely; and its development, what it would lead to, if he followed it out, he could not see at all. It was all abstract and impalpable. It just bewildered and eluded him. But as he sat there, steps were heard below, and to his mind the Spirit spoke, saying, "Three men are asking for thee." They were the servants of Cornelius, the Gentile, coming to ask him to visit their master. Their visit gave him immediately the chance to put into action the idea which had possessed him. We see him standing between the vision and its application. On one side of him was the mysterious sheet full of the multitude of beasts; on the other side were the three men who needed just the principle which the sheet full of beasts involved. It was a critical moment. The question was whether the vision could pass through Peter to the three men and Cornelius. When on the morrow "he went away with them" the question was decided, and the idea and its appropriate duty joined hands.

Peter plodding over the dusty hills to reach Cornelius, may seem to have lost the glory which was on his face while he sat and thought upon the vision, and caught glimpses of the essential nobleness of man—but the vision was at the soul of his journey all the time, and was what made his journey different from that of any peddler whom he met upon the road. *Phillips Brooks,* in *Visions and Tasks.*

The Shepherds and the Magi. It was a critical moment with the shepherds of Judea when the song of the angelic host died away, and the vision splendid faded. Shall they follow this vision, which was given them for a purpose, or shall they fail to translate its message into obedience and action?

It was a time of testing for the Wise men of the East when they saw the star which told them that Jesus was born. It was a long journey that they had to undertake; if they came from no more distant region than Babylon it would be four months before they could reach Jerusalem. And how could they find the Babe in Jerusalem? They might well have hesitated to set forth on so difficult an errand. But they were men of faith and men of action; they, too, were "obedient to the heavenly vision," and they sought and found the Child Jesus.

Obedient to the Vision. When Savonarola was a lad he was wont to spend many an afternoon strolling along the river Po with his grandfather. Once, after a long, silent rest, the boy suddenly said to his companion. "There are voices calling me." "Yes, I believe it," said his grandfather; "you must listen for the Voice." This thought that he was destined for some special task never left him, and his constant prayer was, "Lord, teach me the way my soul should walk!" When at eighteen he entered the monastery at Bologna, he sent word to his friends, who had not known his purpose, "I have listened to the Voice." After a few years there he was sent out to preach to the churches near by, and then to Florence. Here he felt, and rightly, that the true message had come to him, that he had received God's commission to purify the Church from its iniquities. When ordered by the Pope to cease preaching he answered, "I must preach, because God has called me thereto," and his last words before he died a martyr's death were, "My Lord was pleased to die for my sins; why should not I be glad to give up my poor life out of love to Him?"

III The Missionary Topic God is No Respecter of Persons

The Reception of the Gentiles. When Peter was called to account by the other apostles at Jerusalem for what he had done in Cæsarea at the home of Cornelius, the great charge made by them was this, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and didst eat with them." There was no objection raised to Peter's teaching Cornelius nor to his baptising him; but those Jews recoiled in horror at the thought of one of their number entering a Gentile's house and eating with him. Was the proud Jewish exclusiveness to be thus lightly overthrown?

Peter had tarried at Joppa with Simon a tanner. We know how great was Jewish prejudice against tanners. They could not carry on their trade within fifty cubits of a town, their occupation made them Levitically "unclean," and yet Peter had spent several days in Simon the tanner's house. This fact proves that there was working in his mind the leaven of liberal-mindedness which would soon allow him to hail all men everywhere as brothers. Oliver Wendell Holmes says that the mind of a bigot is like the pupil of the eye, the more light you pour upon it the more it contracts. Peter was not a bigot. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him," was the lesson which he learned. With the light of God's truth flooding his eyes he told the other apostles the story of God's dealings with him and with the Gentiles. When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

Racial Prejudice. The great truth which Peter and all the apostles learned, that God is no respecter of persons, that He accepts every one, whatever his nationality, or color, or ignorance, is one that all nations in all ages have been slow to learn. There is a kinship of feeling and habits and education that makes a German more at home with another German than with any one else, or an Englishman with an Englishman, or an American with an American: this is natural and right, but prejudice of those outside such kinship is petty and wrong.

"For ten cents a head," exclaimed a drunken soldier in Manila, "I would kill every Filipino from here to the barracks! Not that I need the money, but because I feel that way." Such racial prejudice against Filipinos or Chinese or Negroes or Pollacks is as unjust as it is un-Christian. Good men and true have their narrow prejudices which make them hold that certain nations and religions are hopeless, and to bring to them the Gospel is inexpedient.

"In God's eyes," says Professor William James in his "Talks on Psychology," " the differences of social position, of intellect, of culture, of cleanliness, of dress, which different men exhibit, and all the other rarities and exceptions on which they so fantastically pin their faith, must be so small as practically quite to vanish; and all that should remain is the common fact that here we are, a countless multitude of vessels of life, each of us pent in to peculiar difficulties, with which we must severally struggle by using whatever of fortitude and goodness we can sum up."

Paramahamsa Deva. In India, as you know, the caste-system prevails, and the religion of the one hundred and fifty or more millions of Brahmanical Hindus consists chiefly in eating and drinking and living according to the rules for the separate castes. The person of a Brahman, a member of the priestly or highest class of all, is considered sacred. Before him a "forerunner" may be seen clearing from his path all persons of inferior caste, that his august person may not be contaminated by their breath.

Paramahamsa Deva was a high caste Brahman who from childhood had never been permitted to associate in any way with his inferiors. When he was graduated from the temple school and became a *guru*, or Brahmanical teacher, he boldly declared that he did not believe in the caste system. All Brahmans were horrified at his views, but what could they do? The Deva's caste put him beyond punishment. He continued to meditate on the great injustice of the caste system, and at last he openly avowed that God had put it into his heart to break the chains which had bound his race for centuries. Conducting his disciples to a plague-stricken village, he said to them there: "My brothers, I am a Brahman of Brahmans, yet, by the grace of God, the lowest of all India's low castes are as dear to my Master as I am. I have a solemn task to perform. Follow me or desert me, as you will, God has spoken and I must obey."

We with our Christian ideas can not fully appreciate the horror of those disciples when they saw the Deva enter the hovel of a sick Sudra, a member of the meanest class of all, and care for him as for a brother. After ten years of such humble service throughout Central India, his influence had borne fruit, and when he invited all Brahmans who loved God more than they did their

caste traditions to participate with men of all castes in a public feast at Benares, several hundred Brahmans responded. His untiring efforts used up his strength, and when still comparatively a young man he laid down his life for his humble brothers. To his faithful followers who gathered in the wretched mud hovel in Oudh where he was dying he said, "Let there be no weeping for me, brothers, for my soul is at peace with God. I go to learn more of His blessed will."

SENTENCE SERMONS

If we knew our brother as God knows him, we should never dare to despise him. *G. H. Morrison.*

Men are many, but humanity is one. *Henry van Dyke.*

A leaf may hide the largest star
From love's uplifted eye;
A moat of prejudice out-bar
A world of charity. *John B. Tabb.*

To render a service to any one is the highest remedy for prejudice against him. *Lyman Abbott.*

Great thoughts are in the air for those who are open-minded; noble impulses crowd the highways for those who are ready to receive and act upon them. *Hamilton Wright Mabie.*

He made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth. Acts 17.26.

Spiritual truths need spiritual discernment.
Wise words in dull ears are but lifeless lore. *Goethe.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

"There is no great and no small
To the great Soul that maketh all,"

for every one that fears Him and does righteous deeds is pleasing in His sight.

I will not despise others because they do not belong to my race, nor because they do not believe or think as I do. I will try to avoid all the unhappiness that comes from not understanding or not tolerating others whose qualities of thought or character are different from my own.

Calvin lived within sight of Mount Blanc, but there is not a line in his writings which indicates that he ever saw it. We live within sight of exalted ideals, the visions of nobleness and duty that come to us; but do our lives indicate that we give heed to them? This purpose so beautifully expressed by Professor H. L. Koopman let us make our own:

When I am dead;
May this with truth be said,
On the rude stone that marks my lowly head,
That, spite of doubt and indecision,
In spite of weakness, lameness, blindness,
Heart's trickery and fate's unkindness,
Neglect of friends and scorn of foes,
Stark poverty and all its woes,
The body's ills that cloud the mind
And the bold spirit bind,
Still through my earthly course I went,
Not disobedient
Unto the Heavenly Vision.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

To Cornelius, a centurion in command of a Roman band at Cæsarea, an angel came in a vision. The angel told him that his prayers had been heard by God,

and bade him send to Joppa for Peter, who was staying with Simon a tanner by the seaside. Cornelius was a devout man who feared God, and gave much alms to the Jews, but he was a Gentile and Jews did not enter the homes of Gentiles. So great, however, was his faith, that he obeyed the command, and sent two of his household servants and one of his soldiers to Joppa, after explaining to them the reason for their errand.

The next day at the time when these three men were nearing Joppa, Peter went upon the house-top to pray. He became hungry, and while food was being prepared he fell into a trance. He saw a receptacle, resembling a sheet upheld at the four corners by an unseen Power, let down before him, and in it all kinds of four-footed beasts and birds and creeping things, and he heard a voice bidding him kill and eat. "Not so, Lord," he answered in horror at the thought, "I have never eaten anything that is unclean." "What God hath cleansed make not thou common," came the answer. Three times this sheet-like receptacle with its contents was let down and then taken up. All had come from God, and the truth of the vision was clear, that what God had made and given was good in His sight.

While Peter was pondering in his mind the full meaning of the vision, the arrival of the messengers gave him its application. They had found Simon's house and were asking at the gate for Peter, when the Spirit bade Peter go down and go with them as they wished, for they had been divinely sent. Peter called them in and lodged them over night, putting at once into practice his understanding of the vision.

On the morrow he took friends with him and went to Cæsarea. At Cornelius' home he found many of the kinsmen and friends of Cornelius awaiting him, and learned from Cornelius himself the way in which he had been led to send for him. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him," exclaimed the apostle, and he preached to these Gentiles about Jesus the Christ. While he was preaching the Holy Spirit fell on all, and Peter had them baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem the other apostles upbraided him for "entering into the home of Gentiles and eating with them." Peter justified his conduct by telling them of the two visions and of the coming of the Holy Spirit. "Who was I that I could withstand God?" he questioned. When they heard Peter's words they glorified God and said, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Race prejudice.
2. Religious prejudice. See "The True Man and Church Caste," by Laird Wingate Snell in the *Outlook,* Sept. 14, 1907.
3. The power of ideals, the twentieth century visions.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. There were two apostles by the name of James; which one did Herod put to death? 2. What special privileges had James had during the life of Jesus? (Luke 8.51; 9.28; Mark 14.33.) 3. When he had asked for the first place in Christ's kingdom, what question had Christ asked and what was his answer? (Mark 10.35-39.) 4. Why were James and Peter the apostles whom Herod persecuted? 5. What festival is meant by "The days of unleavened bread"? (See the 12th chapter of Exodus.) 6. How many times had Peter been imprisoned before this? (Lessons V and VII of the first quarter.) 7. How had Peter escaped the previous time? 8. What weapons had Peter's enemies? 9. His friends? 10. What parable did Jesus give to show that "One ought always to pray and not to faint"? (Luke 18.1-8.) 11. Give an account of Peter's appearing at the house of Mary. (Acts 12.12-17.) 12. What did Herod do on hearing of Peter's escape? (Acts 12.18, 19.) 14. How did Herod die? (Acts 12. 20-23.)

LESSON II—APRIL 11

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

Read Acts 12.1-19. Commit verse 7.

Golden Text

The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Psalm 34.7.

LESSON TEXT Acts 12.1-11

1 Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And *those* were the days of unleavened bread. 4 And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people. 5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. 10 And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *About that time.* See 11.30.—*Herod the king.* Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great.

2. *James.* One of the three favorite disciples of Jesus. See Matt. 4.21. He and Judas are the only ones of the Twelve Apostles whose deaths are recorded in the New Testament.—*With the sword.* He was beheaded.

3. *It pleased the Jews.* "He rejoiced in living in good reputation" (*Josephus*). —The days of unleavened bread. The Passover was called the festival of unleavened bread, because no leaven, or yeast, was allowed in Jewish homes while the festival lasted.

4. *Four quarternions of soldiers.* Four sets of men, one for each watch, and four men in each set, two of whom were chained to Peter in the cell, and two were on guard outside.—*After the Passover.* The Greek word πάσχα, Passover, is wrongly translated *Easter* in the King James' Version: *Easter* is of Saxon origin.

6. *The same night.* The night before his trial and execution as planned by Herod. "God's time to help is when things are brought to their last extremity" (*Henry*).

11. *When Peter was come to himself.* Compare the similar expression in the

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

parable of the Prodigal Son. Peter had been dazed, and had thought his experience unreal.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

11. *The Lord hath sent his angel.* God hath a thousand keys to open a thousand doors for the deliverance of His own when it has come to the greatest extremity. Let us be faithful and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for Him, and lay God's part on Him, and leave it there; duties are ours, events are the Lord's. When our faith goeth to meddle with events, and to hold a court (if I may so speak) upon God's providence, and beginneth to say, "How wilt Thou do this or that?" we lose ground; we have nothing to do there, it is our part to let the Almighty exercise His own office and steer His own helm. *Samuel Rutherford.*

11. *Hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod.* Henceforth, for the long time of twenty years, between his escape from Herod and his death, we derive our knowledge of his life only from such incidental allusions as occur in the Epistles, or from such uncertain light as can be gathered from ecclesiastical traditions. *Dean Stanley.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *Intending after the Passover to bring him forth.* Herod purposed putting Peter to death, but as a strict Jew he would not pollute the festival by shedding blood, and therefore had Peter imprisoned till after the Passover. There were four modes of execution lawful among the Jews, stoning, decapitation, burning and strangling.

6. *Peter was sleeping between two soldiers.* Soldiers act in the East in the capacity of our policemen, their duties being similar to those of the French gendarmes, or armed police. Those who act in this way in Palestine are called *Zabteeych.* This will explain why in the New Testament soldiers are always said to be employed where we should employ policemen. *James Neil,* in *Pictured Palestine.*

6. *Bound with two chains.* It was the Roman custom to fasten a chain from the right wrist of a prisoner to the left wrist of a soldier. When extraordinary precautions were taken, as in the case of Peter, the prisoner was chained to two soldiers, one on each side.

A Prisoner Chained to Two Soldiers.

10. *The iron gate that leadeth into the city opened to them of its own accord.* The iron gate which led out upon the street from the prison courtyard would, of course, be strongly secured. Van Lennep, in "Bible Lands," thus describes an oriental city gate to which the prison gate may have been somewhat similar. "The gates are large, massive, and two-leaved, built of heavy timber, plated with iron. A strong iron bar, hooked at one end, hangs from a heavy ring of the same metal, made fast in a strong post, built into the wall behind each fold of the gate. When the gate is closed, the hooks are set into other iron rings, on the back of its folds, enabling the gate to resist a very heavy pressure from without. The lock is massive and of wrought iron, and the long-handled, ponderous key is carried by the keeper of the gate in his belt, or hung from a nail in his little room close by."

8. *Gird thyself, bind on thy sandals, cast thy garment about thee.* Peter had removed his sandals, which were only soles bound on his feet by leather straps or thongs, and had removed his girdle, which confined the folds of his long abba or outer garment. At night this woolen garment was thrown over the owner as a blanket, and therefore was to be then returned if taken in pledge, Ex. 22.26, 27.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Jerusalem has been the headquarters of the Christian Church throughout the history recorded in the early chapters of Acts, and Peter has been the leading spirit among the apostles. The center is about to change from Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria, and the leadership, as far as we know from the Acts, from Peter to Paul. Although our to-day's lesson is closely connected in time with lesson IV of this quarter, our lesson committee has wisely postponed the two lessons about Paul, III and IV, which are given in Acts before this lesson, until we have finished "The Acts of Peter." Briefly review the main facts of the history of the Church in Jerusalem, lessons I to VIII of the first quarter, and of the extension of the gospel to Samaria and "all Judea," lessons IX to XI of the first quarter and lesson I of the second. The date of the lesson is probably 44 A. D., the year of Herod's death.

The scene of the lesson is Jerusalem. The location of the prison can not be known, though many claim that it was the Tower of Antonia.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Late one evening a gentleman came home unexpectedly, and found his house closed. He could not arouse any one, and he had no key with him. Going to a near-by drug store, he telephoned to the central office several miles away, and asked the one in charge to ring up his house number and tell the one who answered that he was on the front steps waiting to get in. The ringing of the telephone near his room aroused the sleeping butler to answer it, and soon he was at the door letting in the owner of the house.

It was a long way round by which this gentleman accomplished his purpose, but it was a very efficient way. In our lesson to-day the disciples who are in the same city with Peter, they in their homes and he in prison, can do nothing themselves to free him. We see them send their messages a long way round by the way of the throne of God, and the prison gate opens to let Peter pass through.

For Older Pupils. Herod I, or Herod the Great as he is better known, died soon after the birth of Jesus, and his kingdom, you remember, was divided among his three sons. Herod Antipas, the son to whom Galilee and Perea were given, was the Herod who put John the Baptist to death. Aristobulus was another son whom Herod the Great had accused of plotting against him, who was strangled by order of the court at his father's wish. The son of Aristobulus, the grandson of Herod the Great, is known in history as Herod Agrippa I. Josephus calls him "Agrippa the Great."

The early life of Herod Agrippa I was spent in Rome. He lived there in such luxury and magnificence that his debts forced him to take refuge in Judea. Because of his quarrels and intrigues he was again compelled to flee, and having succeeded in obtaining money in Alexandria he revisited Rome. The Emperor Tiberius received him kindly and with his son, Caius Caligula, he became very friendly. When Tiberius learned that Herod had said he hoped Caius would soon succeed to the throne, he had him imprisoned, where he remained chained to a soldier until Caius Caligula became emperor in A. D. 37. Caligula set him at liberty, presented him with a gold chain weighing as much as the iron one with which he had been bound, and gave him the tetrarchy of Philip, with the title of King. From this emperor he also received later the terarchy of Galilee and Perea. When Caligula was murdered and Claudius became emperor Herod succeeded in winning his favor also. Claudius added to Herod's realm Judea and Samaria, so that between the years 41 and 44 A. D. he ruled all Palestine as had his grandfather, Herod the Great.

His ambition went still further, he wished to become an independent king, and he needed the favor of the Jews. Because he had prevented Caligula from carrying out his purpose of having his statue placed in the temple, in the Holy of Holies, he was already popular with his subjects despite his introduction of Roman customs. He would court their favor further by persecuting this new sect which the Jewish leaders so hated, and he began with the most prominent apostles, knowing that this would arouse "the expectation of the Jews."

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Prevailing Prayer

The Supplication of a Righteous Man availeth much in its Working. Once before Peter had been imprisoned, and when the Sanhedrin sent for him the prison was found securely fastened and the keepers standing at the doors, but Peter was preaching in the temple. This time every precaution against escape was taken. Sixteen soldiers were detailed to guard him, four at a time; iron chains bound him to a soldier on either side and two other soldiers stood on guard without the cell. "Peter therefor was kept in prison, but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him." In contrast with all this power on the one hand, Luke places the sole resource of the church on the other, prayer. To use a line of Tennyson's they were

Battering at the gates of heaven with stones of prayer,

and their prayer prevailed; Peter was freed.

The Bible is full of the conviction that through prayer great things are achieved.

"O wondrous power of faithful prayer!
What tongue can tell the mighty grace?
God's hands are bound or open are,
As Moses or Elijah prays,"

sings Charles Wesley. Can we believe that God answers only the prayers of a Moses or an Elijah, and not of a Gladstone or a Phillips Brooks?

The reflex influence that prayer has upon our own hearts every Christian knows, and to the positive results outside of oneself effected by prayer the great souls of all ages have borne witness. Truly "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Such men as Stonewall Jackson, Chinese Gordon, David Livingstone, George Müller and a host of others have led a life of prayer and have known by their own experience that the supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working.

Prayer is not philosophically explainable; it is philosophically reasonable. When we put our mouth at the transmitter of a telephone, and deliver our message to that little film of metal before us, we can not explain how its vibrations are repeated to one standing with the receiver at his ear hundreds of miles away, so that he hears what we are saying, but he does hear and he answers back to us.

We can not understand how words uttered into the air or only formulated in our minds can reach the throne of God, but God does hear and answer them. Prayer is as real a power as electricity.

The Condition. In a single sentence the apostle John gives the condition which must be fulfilled if our prayers are to prevail with God. "This is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." The church did not know that it was the will of God that Peter should not at this time, like Stephen and James, suffer a martyr's death, but they prayed earnestly, nevertheless, that Peter's life might be spared. They must have prayed submissively, asking only that their prayers be granted if it were God's will. What did Jesus mean when He said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"? He did not mean that we have a claim on God which He is bound to acknowledge if we ask it. He meant that whatever we ask in the name and in the spirit of Jesus Himself, whatever, therefore, is in accordance with the divine will, will be granted us. Our prayer will be answered in our way, if it is the right way, but if it is not, then in God's own way; as Whittier beautifully says:

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told!

From the *Youth's Companion* come these very helpful words on the right use of prayer. "Many unconsciously think prayer a charm, and trust to it superstitiously. Many, on the other hand, do not pray enough, and consider

prayer a failure. But a crisis in life comes. An unknown disgrace threatens. We try to pray out of it. A dear one sickens. We try to pray him well. The disgrace strikes. The dear one dies. To our horror and astonishment our prayers are unanswered. What is the matter? On whom is the failure to be laid? We have prayed and done our part. Shall we then distrust God, and think that the religious life and intimate relations with God are unreal?

There is a better way than that. Above all things we must pray sensibly. A man can not be unreasonable in religion any more than in business, and expect success. There are two ways of looking at this question. There are certain things which it is evident we ought to have. There are certain other things which we do not know whether we ought to have or not.

We know that we ought to have purity, veracity, honor, trust, unselfishness, and faith in God. There is no dispute in heaven or on earth about these things.

We do not know whether we ought to be warm or cold, hungry or fed, sick or well, rich or poor, happy or miserable. God does. In these doubtful matters we can only suggest, and not dictate to the Almighty. To Him belongs the decision. Our business is to pray, even if we do not get what we want. His part is to answer in the way His love and wisdom dictate.

But as concerns the things that we know we ought to have because we are sure that they must be what He wishes us to have, our duty is to pray, and not only expect to get, but seek to get, what we ask for."

II The Value of Trouble

What Peter learned. Peter had been in prison for some days, at any rate, and the praying had been going on all the while, and there was no answer. Day after day "of the unleavened bread" and of the festival was slipping away. The last night had come; "and the same night" the light shone, and the angel appeared. Why did Jesus Christ not hear the cry of these poor supplicants sooner? For their sakes, for Peter's sake, for our sakes, for His own sake. For the eventful intervention at the very last moment, and yet at a sufficiently early moment, tested faith. And look how beautifully all bore the test. The man that was to be killed to-morrow is lying quietly sleeping in his cell. Not a very comfortable pillow he had to lay his head upon, with a chain on each arm and a legionary on each side of him. But he slept; and whilst he was asleep Christ was awake, and the brethren were awake. Their faith was tested, and it stood the test, and thereby was strengthened. And Peter's patience and faith, being tested in like manner and in like manner standing the test, were deepened and confirmed. Depend upon it, he was a better man all his days, because he had been brought close up to Death and looked in the fleshless eye-sockets, unwinking and unterrified. And I daresay if, long after, he had been asked, "Would you not have liked to have escaped those two or three days of suspense, and to have been let go at an earlier moment?" he would have said, "Not for worlds! For I learned in those days that my Lord's time is the best. I learned patience"—a lesson which Peter especially needed—"and I learned trust." *Alexander Maclaren,* in *The Victor's Crowns.*

The Training that comes from Troubles. Disappointments of every sort, sorrows, sufferings, trials, struggles, false friends, poor health—who shall catalog the truths of human life? Who shall tell the difference between two men who live in different aspects of all these things? Are they intrusions, accidents, thwartings and disappointments of the will of God? Or are they (this is what our doctrine says they are) Messiahs, things sent, having, like the ships that sail to our ports from far-off lands of barbarian richness, rare spices and fragrant oils and choice foods that we can not find at home, whose foreign luxuriance forces its odorous way through the coarse and uncouth coverings in which their wealth was packed away in the savage lands from which they came? Are they prolific sources of spiritual culture, contributing what our best happiness could not have except from them, the energy and vitality which there is no way of stirring up in human nature but by some sense of danger, the fire to mingle with the glass? *Phillips Brooks, Sermons.*

God will make it Plain. Travelers in Africa tell us that a native, before crossing a raging stream, puts a heavy burden upon his head,—a stone, if noth-

ing else is at hand. The weight helps the foot keep firm hold of the treacherous river bed, and prevents his being swept away by the on-rushing flood. Are not troubles sent for a similar purpose, to keep one from making shipwreck of his life?

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has said that all chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous, yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness. A man who was making a collection of moths received a present of an emperor moth's coccoon. He hung it up in his room, and in the spring he found the moth trying to emerge from its prison. The hole was so small, the film of the coccoon so tough, that he thought he would help the moth by enlarging the hole with his scissors. The insect was soon freed, but it could not use its fine large wings. He had done it a mistaken kindness by depriving it of the struggles necessary to force into its wings the juices of its body. The fruit of righteousness is the result of chastening for those who have been exercised thereby. The chastening seems not joyous for the present, but afterwards it yields the fruit. God is His own interpreter, and afterwards He will make plain to us the reason for the chastening.

From the pen of Dr. G. H. Knight comes this beautiful thought: "As it is the water that dashes against the mill-wheel that keeps the mill in motion, so the incessantly beating trials of life keep grace in the soul alive. It is said that migrating birds, preparing to wing their flight to summer climes, wait for a wind that blows against them, for that assists them to rise to the needed elevation; and the things of which we often say, 'All these things are against me,' are the things of which God says, 'They are meant to help you to soar.'"

III The Missionary Topic The Opened Door

The Iron Gate opened of its Own Accord. When Peter and the angel were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city, which opened to them of its own accord. Equally true has it been from that day to this that God has opened doors firmly fastened, and the words of Revelation seems applicable to any good cause beset with difficulties—Behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut.

> Yet this one thing I learn to know,
> Each day more surely as I go,
> That doors are opened, ways are made,
> Burdens are lifted or are laid,
> By some great law unseen and still.

This lesson that Helen Hunt Jackson learned has been learned by the missionaries in their difficult fields of labors. It used to be said that the Zenanas in India could never be entered, but "God swung the doors ajar in answer to fervent and faithful prayer and effort." Africa used to be called the Dark Continent. To-day it is called the Continent of Opportunity. Everywhere the cry is now, not so much for open doors, as for open hearts to take advantage of opened doors which none can shut.

He that hath the Key of David. He is a Ruler commanding innumerable and invincible super-terrestrial powers; angels, stars, and ages are in His retinue, and none may withstand Him. How wonderfully has this claim already justified itself! The brazen gates of Rome were opened to Him; He entered in triumph the dark doors of the northern nations. Doors closed for ages, doors which appeared sealed for ever, are to welcome the Messiah. Is not the spectacle before our eyes? The portals of India are unbarred; the hoary doors of China are groaning on their hinges; the citadel of Burma surrenders; the venerable gates of Japan are ajar. The doors of idol shrines, choked by the bitter weeds of ages, give Him entrance; the jealously guarded palaces of paganism are yielding to a diviner sovereignity; and heathen nations, long isolated and impenetrable, are beginning to acknowledge His sway. And the defiant must yield. Gates of brass and bars of iron will open of themselves. *William L. Watkinson,* in *The Supreme Conquest.*

Other Keys. The marks of God are seen plainly in the rapid unlocking of long-shut gates, and in the peculiar keys used by Him for their opening. When

the nineteenth century began, the enterprise of missions seemed, to the worldly wise and prudent, not only vague but visionary—hopelessly, foolishly chimerical. Cannibalism in the Islands of the Sea, fetishism on the dark continent, a rigid caste system in India, an exclusive policy in China, intolerance in papal lands, and absolute prohibition in Moslem territory—these were a few of the hundred barriers which on every side seemed impassable. Taken singly they were formidable— taken together they constituted an encircling wall, too strong to batter down, too high to scale. Even if outer barriers could be passed, it would still be necessary to confront ignorance, idolatry, superstition, depravity, everywhere and, in most cases, conspiring together to rear before the church other impassable walls, with gates of steel. The only welcome awaiting God's messengers was that of cannibal ovens, merciless prisons, or martyrs' graves. But, as the little band advanced, on every hand the walls of Jericho fell, and the iron gates opened of their own accord. India, Siam, Burma, China, Japan, Turkey, Africa, Mexico, South America, the papal States, and Korea, were successively and successfully entered. Within five years, from 1853 to 1858, new facilities were given to the entrance and occupation of seven different countries, together embracing half the world's population. There was also a remarkable subsidance of obstacles. At the same time God was raising up workers in unprecedented numbers, and men and women so marvelously fitted for the exact work and field as to show unmistakably foresight and purpose. *Arthur T. Pierson,* in *The Modern Missionary Century.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Sufferings are lessons. *Greek Saying.*

Prayer is so mighty an instrument that no one ever thoroughly mastered all its keys. *Hugh Miller.*

It is impossible for that man to despair who remembers that his Helper is Omnipotent. *Jeremy Taylor.*

A man has only as much religion as he can command in time of trouble. *Andrew Fuller.*

The man who does not believe that God can speak to him will not speak to God. *A. F. Fairbairn.*

To lose our trials would be to forego our triumphs. *Sunday School Times.*

> Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;
> Love is the only angel who can bid the gates unroll;
> And when he comes to call thee, arise and follow fast;
> His way may lie through darkness, but it leads to light at last.
>
> *Van Dyke.*

We ask what we think is best; God gives what He knows is best. *William Burkitt.*

No kindnesses shown in act are so important and so essential a part of friendship as prayer for our friend. *J. R. Miller.*

> Call upon me in the day of trouble;
> I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Psa. 50.15.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

The disciples prayed for Peter's life although they knew not whether it was God's will that he should live. I, too, may pray for the desire of my heart, but I must pray as Jesus prayed, not my will, but Thine be done. I will think of God as my Father and of prayer as a privilege and a power, and will cultivate my prayer life so that I may have the joy of living in trustful fellowship with my heavenly Father, and also the strength and the help that comes from communion with Him.

Suffering and troubles of all kinds I will regard as part of God's design in my education, and I will try to learn the lesson each one has to teach me.

Peter was sleeping calmly although chained to two soldiers and knowing full well that the morrow might be his last. The explanation may be found in his faith that he was in his Father's hands, and whatever He appointed for him was best . "My peace give I unto you" said Jesus to his sorrowing disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful." If we take our

troubles to God in prayer and leave them with Him, we may be kept in the peace of God.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

A new persecutor of the Church arose in the person of Herod, the king who at this time ruled all Palestine under the Romans. To gain the favor of the Jews he had James, the brother of John, put to death, and finding that this accomplished his purpose he decided to please them further by taking Peter's life also. Because the Passover week had come, and he would not shed blood at that sacred time, he had Peter imprisoned, intending after the Passover to bring him forth for a spectacular execution. Very carefully was Peter guarded day and night. A soldier was chained to him on each side, and two soldiers were placed on guard outside the cell. These four soldiers were changed at every watch.

All this time the church was praying earnestly for Peter, and the result Luke tells us in so vivid a way that we seem to see Peter asleep in the peaceful assurance that the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and then suddenly there is visible the glory of a heavenly visitant who awakens Peter and as the chains fall from his hands bids him gird himself, put on his sandals, cast his garment about him, and follow him. We see them pass by the guards, and as they approach the big iron door we see it swing open of its own accord to let them through. We follow them as they walk through one street, and then, all danger of pursuit being over, the angel leaves Peter. The bewildered apostle finds himself alone in the silent night, and as he "comes to himself," for he had thought that he was dreaming, he exclaims, "Now I know of a truth that the Lord hath sent his angel and delivered me."

Going to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many of the disciples were met in prayer, he knocked to gain admission. A young girl named Rhoda ran to the door, but when she heard Peter's voice she left him standing there in her joy and ran to tell the good news to the others. They told her that she was mad, and they were amazed when they opened the door and saw him. After telling them how he had been freed from prison he went elsewhere for safety.

Going to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many of the caped. Soon afterwards when he was at Cæsarea, a deputation of men from Tyre and Sidon came to see him. Herod addressed them from the throne, and wishing to gain his good favor, for he had been displeased with them, they shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of a man." In the midst of such adulation which was pleasing to him, he was stricken with a terrible disease and suddenly died. The king who would have put Peter to death has himself died, for man proposes, but God disposes.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The economy of power in miracles.
2. The art of prayer. See the article in the *Outlook* for August 11, 1906.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What have you already heard about Paul? (Lesson VIII of the first quarter.) 2. What does Paul say about his early life and his character in Acts 22.3; Phil. 3.5, 6; 2 Cor. 11.21, 22? 3. Why did he persecute the Christians? (Acts 26.9, 14; 1 Tim. 1.13.) 4. What did he say about his persecutions in Acts 22.4, 19, 20; 26.10.11? 5. Study together the three accounts of Paul's conversion given in Acts 9.1-22; 22.1-16; 29.9-20 and compare 1 Cor. 15.8, 9; 2 Cor. 11.32, 33; Gal. 1.13-17; 1 Tim. 1.12-16. 6. How can you explain the fact that Paul afterwards said he saw Jesus, and yet in verse 7 it says that those with him beheld no one? (Compare John 12.28, 29.) 7. How was he persecuting Jesus? (Luke 10.16.) 8. What qualification was regarded as indispensable for an apostle? (Acts 1.22.) 9. Compare Saul's conversion and the Ethiopian's. 10. *Begin a Life of Paul.* See the topic "Written Work", page 15.

LESSON III—APRIL 18

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

Read Acts 9.1-30. Commit verses 15, 16.

Golden Text

He fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Acts 9.4.

LESSON TEXT Acts 9.1-19a

1 But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: 4 and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he *said*, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: 6 but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. 11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; 12 and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him that he might receive his sight. 13 But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem; 14 and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. 18 And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; 19 and he took food and was strengthened.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *But Saul.* The *but* indicates the contrast in Luke's mind between Philip's zeal (Acts 8.40) for the church and Saul's zeal in persecuting it.—*Yet.* See the first three verses of this chapter.—*Breathing threatening.* "The figure is founded on the fact that a person under excitement of a strong emotion breathes harder and quicker, pants, struggles to give vent to the passion of which he is full" (*Hackett*). See Paul's words in Acts 22.4; 26.9-11.

2. *Asked letters...unto the synagogues.* These letters were his "authority and commission," Acts 26.12.—*Any that were of the Way.* For the expression *the Way*, see Acts 19.9; 22.4; 24.22. It refers to the mode of life; those of the Way were the sect that followed the teachings of Jesus, the Christians, as they

were later called.—Unto *Jerusalem.* He would bring them before the Sanhedrin for trial.

3. *Suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven.* It was noonday (Acts 22.6), and the light was brighter than the sun (Acts 26.13).

4. *A voice.* In Hebrew (Acts 26.14).—*Saul, Saul.* The repetition expresses emphasis.—*Me.* See Luke 10.16; Matt. 25.40.

5. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* This clause in King James' Version is omitted from the Revised Version, because it is not found in the Greek manuscripts. It is thought to have been inserted here in the Vulgate by a copyist from 22.10 and 26.14.

6. *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, What wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him.* These words in the King James' Version are omitted from the Revised Version. See Acts 22.10.

7. *Hearing the voice, but beholding no man.* Compare Dan. 10.7. In Acts 22.9 it says that "they heard not the voice." In the Greek different cases are used in the two verses, and the explanation is that they heard the sound but not the words as Paul did. Compare John 12.29.—This verse implies that Paul saw Jesus; Barnabas states this in verse 27, and in 1 Cor. 9.1; 15.8, 9, Paul himself based his claim to be an apostle on his having seen the Lord.

10, 11, 12. *Ananias.* See 22.12.—*Behold he prayeth.* As a Pharisee Saul would pray; the meaning would seem to be that he was calling on the name of Jesus, verse 14.—*In a vision,* King James' Version.

13. *Thy saints.* The disciples of Christ are often called *saints* in the Acts and in Paul's writings.

15. *A chosen vessel.* "Literally, a 'vessel of election,' an Hebraic phrase denoting God's sovereign use of human instruments" (*Bartlet*). This is Paul's commission; the Acts tells how he carried it out.—*Kings.* Acts 26.2. In Paul's account to Agrippa of his conversion, Acts 26.16-18, his commission is given him directly by Jesus when he was on the way to Damascus. Two explanations have been offered, either of which is reasonable: (1) the address as given to Agrippa is omitted from Luke's account; (2) Paul condensed his narrative to Agrippa, and omitted all mention of Ananias for the sake of brevity, putting "what was at a later period enjoined by the mediation of another at once into the mouth of Christ, the immediate author of that injunction."

16. *Many things.* Compare 2 Cor. 11.23-28.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

3. *Paul asked of the high priest letters to Damascus unto the synagogues.* Julius Cæsar, by imperial edict, B. C. 47, decreed that "Hyrcanus and his children do retain all the rights of high priest, whether established by law or accorded by courtesy; if hereafter any question arise touching the Jewish polity I desire that the determination thereof be referred to him." This decree was subsequently confirmed by Augustus, and under these decrees, and the general policy which they embodied, the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem continued to exercise its judicial powers over the Jews wherever found, and was supported in this by the acquiescence, if not by the active co-operation, of the Roman authorities. *Lyman Abbott, The Acts.*

2. *That were of the Way.* The metaphor of the path or road of life is very common in the Old Testament: we meet it in quotations in the Acts, in 2.28 and 13.10. There was a contemporary popular manual which described the two ways, viz: the way of life and the way of death. In the New Testament we read of the way of salvation, of peace, of truth, of righteousness, and on the other hand is the way of Balaam and of Cain. Our Lord called Himself "the way" and so it was natural that those who were following in the footsteps of His life should also call their society or body "the way." *R. B. Rackham,* in *Commentary on The Acts.*

17. *The Lord appeared unto thee.* Paul *saw.* Men see in two ways. Both these ways appear to the person who sees equally to be the transmission of realities which exist outside himself. The two are, in fact, exactly opposed to each other: our normal vision and visionary sight. The former rests on the visionary pictures transmitted physically from without, the latter on retina pictures communicated from within in states of extreme psychical emotion.

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What sort of vision was it in which Paul beheld the Son of God in the light out of heaven on the way to Damascus? The answer to the question will vary according to a man's conception of the universe. The question has no existence for faith. Faith knows that what happened, happened in any case because God chose to work it thus—whether Paul really beheld Jesus in the light, or whether it was merely a visionary sight. It is a question of our conception of the universe, in so far as it brings us face to face with the problem: Do we admit the possibility of appearances of persons from another world to the sensual vision? or do we uphold the theory of a world in unbroken conformity to law? Do we refuse to the Maid of Orleans, who, in the same celestial radiance as Paul, beheld the saints of her native village, what we grant as a possibility in the apostle's case? *H. Weinel, St. Paul.*

17. *The Lord appeared unto thee.* The religion of the Jews from its first beginning to its fullest development in Christianity was founded on the belief that human nature can, in certain cases, at certain moments in the life of certain individuals, come into direct communion with the Divine Being, and can thus learn the purpose and will of God. In other words, God occasionally reveals Himself to man.

St. Paul believed unhesitatingly in the frequent occurrences of such revelations. He had been trained from infancy in the Hebrew view. In his later years he did not consider that such revelation had been denied to other nations and confined absolutely to the Jews. But among the Jews alone there was found a long succession of great men who heard and obeyed the divine voice. Each was, in a sense, the disciple of his predecessor, learning from the past and acquiring fuller comprehension of and susceptibility to the divine nature and revelation.

Saul must from childhood have been filled with the desire and hope of hearing for himself the divine voice. He must have had his mind roused by the message of John the Baptist; he may probably have heard him, and believed fervently his announcement of the immediate coming of Christ. Undoubtedly he was preparing himself by education, by study, by scrupulous obedience to the Law, by ardent zeal in enforcing it on others, to be in a fit state to hear the voice of God. The issue was that he did become the recipient of revelation, and that his life was profoundly affected, and his views revolutionized thereby. He repeatedly described himself, or is described by others, as having both seen the Lord and heard His voice.

It is part of our view that the divine nature, if really existent in our world, must in some way come into relation to man, and affect mankind. What is God to us if we cannot come into knowledge of, or relation with Him? Either you must say that we know nothing about the existence of any God, or you must admit that man can in some way become aware of the existence, *i. e.* the nature, of God. Now to say that we can become aware of the nature of God is only another way of saying that the divine nature is revealed to man; and if it is revealed that can only be because it reveals itself by coming into direct relation to man. There is nothing that can reveal God except Himself.

It must, therefore, be true that God reveals Himself to man in some way or other. St. Paul claims to have received such revelation. He also claims to have received this revelation in an eminent and unusual degree: in other words, that he was more sensitive to, and more able to learn about, the divine nature than others.

Why should we doubt, or hesitate to admit, that there may be even greater differences between different men as regards the power of coming into relation with, and comprehending, the divine nature than there is in power of comprehending mathematical truth? Yet all men have some little power of comprehending mathematical reasoning, and similarly all are endowed with some rudimentary power of attaining a knowledge of the divine nature. Condensed from an article by *W. M. Ramsay,* on *Shall we hear Evidence or not?* in *The Expositor.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

5. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* This is a Greek and Latin as well as Jewish proverb, derived from the use of an ox-goad. The ox-goad

is a pole seven to ten feet long, on one end of which is a broad, thin piece of iron used for cleaning the plowshare, and on the other a pointed iron, or "prick" used on the oxen instead of a whip. The plowshare is attached by a long pole to the yoke of the oxen, and the driver needs a long rod to reach them from where he stands to direct the plow. An unruly ox that begins to kick finds himself striking against the sharp prick. "Paul had been lashing out blindly, fiercely, like a restive ox, who fails to realize that the path he is to travel in is laid out before him, and that the One who controls him is both wiser and stronger than he. He feels the sharp prick of the steel-pointed goad, and at first only kicks the harder; till mere brute strength can bear the pain no longer, and the stronger, wiser will prevails."

15. *He is a chosen vessel unto me.* As the human is the vehicle and instrument of the Spirit, it is very natural to speak of it as a vessel: but the Jews probably drew the metaphor from the work of the potter, and regarded men as vessels made by the Creator. Thus Jeremiah spoke of Coniah as a despised, broken vessel, and in the Maccabees the Jews are called vessels of glory. Similarly, Christians are vessels of God, filled with His grace, furnishing and adorning His house. *R. B. Rackham.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

We now turn back a few years, and take up the study of the life of Paul, that wonderful apostle about whom center the rest of our lessons of this year. After the death of Stephen, Saul "laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison." How his rage must have increased when he found that those who "were scattered abroad went about preaching the word," that his persecution of the church had only driven the Christians away from Jerusalem to spread elsewhere the knowledge of that Jesus whom he hated! With his anger, his fanatical zeal and determination to put down the heresy at whatever cost also grew apace. He threw all the energy of his great mind and heart into this work of persecution, for he was passionately earnest in his belief that Jesus was an impostor. No Gospel and no Epistle had yet been written, and he knew about Jesus only from His enemies. He believed that a Messiah was yet to come who would make Israel the dominant nation of the world; his Pharisaic pride would not let him consider the possibility of this lowly Nazarene, who had suffered death on the cross, being the promised Messiah. Paul planned a campaign against the Christians beyond Palestine, but on his way to Damascus the event occurred which suddenly changed him from a persecuting Pharisee to a penitent Christian. Three accounts of his conversion are given in the Acts: in our lesson to-day, in 22.5-16, and in 26.12-18. Of course Paul must have told this story again and again, and not always in just the same words. The three accounts agree in essential particulars, but differ in details, "thus affording that mark of internal credibility—substantial truth combined with circumstantial variety." The differences are noted under *Words and Phrases Explained.*

The date of Paul's conversion is 36 A. D., according to the chronology here followed. Many scholars place the event earlier.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

There were several routes which Saul could have taken from Jerusalem to Damascus. One led northward to Shechem in Samaria, then on to Scythopolis in the Jordan Valley and across the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee, and then northeastward to Damascus. Instead of crossing the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee he could have continued around the western shore and crossed the river north of that lake, going on to Damascus by way of Cæsarea Philippi. Another route would have taken him from Jerusalem to Jericho and thence across the Jordan. The distance between the two places is about eighty miles "as the crow flies."

Damascus is the oldest city in the world, and has now a population of 150,000. It has a fine situation in a plain at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, on the highway of traffic with the East. A Christian burying

ground on the east of the city is the traditional spot of Saul's vision. The street called Straight still runs through the city from east to west, but it is now called Sultany or Queen Street, and its former spacious width of a hundred feet has been narrowed to almost a lane. Of course there are traditional houses of Judas and of Ananias on this street.

Straight Street Seen Through One of the Arches of the Tripie Gate.

Tarsus, the boyhood home of Saul, is in Celicia, Asia Minor. It was an important Greek city, one of the great university towns of his time.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Review lesson VIII of the first quarter, emphasizing Saul's part in Stephen's martyrdom and the probable effect upon him of Stephen's words and spirit. Tell what is known about Paul's early life. See page 18.

For Older Pupils. In the year that Ferdinand and Isabella furnished Columbus with the means to start forth to discover a new world, these Christian rulers of Spain issued a decree ordering the execution of any unbaptized Jew found in their country after one hundred and twenty days. In their zeal for the Christian religion they thought that in persecuting the Jews they were doing the will of God. A wealthy Jew offered them an enormous sum of money to be used for their kingdom if they would annul the decree. Fearing they might yield, the monk Torquemada, whom they had appointed Inquisitor-general of Spain, sought an interview with them, and holding up a crucifix exclaimed, "Judas sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver. Sell Him again for a higher price, and give to God an account of your bargain." During sixteen years of Torquemada's rule, over eight thousand victims were given to the flames, ninety thousand were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and over eight hundred thousand Jews were expelled from Spain. All this was done in the name of Christ! As conscientious as these Christians of the fifteenth century in persecuting the Jews, was Saul the Jew of the first century in persecuting the Christians.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Who Art Thou, Lord?

Whom say ye that I am? "Before any work for God always comes the vision of God," says Dr. W. H. P. Faunce. "I have had men say to me, 'Didn't Paul's Christian life begin with the question, 'What wilt Thou have me to do?' No, it did not; no Christian life begins with that question. It begins with the question, 'Who art Thou Lord?' When Paul had settled that it was the risen Christ who appeared to him, then came the much easier question, 'What wilt Thou have me to do?'"

When for three years Jesus had been teaching His disciples and His work was nearly finished, when His thoughts were turned toward Jerusalem and His approaching death, He took them with Him on His last northward journey, and at Cæsarea Philippi He asked them whom others said that He was, and then suddenly put to them the great personal question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered for them all. Sure and true came his "great confession," "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

There are those who see in Christ a great historic character, the ideal man of the human race; there are those who regard Him as only a dreamy, impracticable man; there are those who have no definite convictions whatever in regard to Him, who have never answered for themselves the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" It is the great question which every one must answer at some time or other, and, answered rightly,—"The acknowledgement of God

THE VALLEY BELOW MT. HERMON

Traversed by St. Paul on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus

in Christ," as Browning says—"Solves for thee all questions in the earth and out of it."

Peter's Way. Peter differed from Paul. While the Apostle to the Gentiles leaped at once into the radical position that followed logically the acknowledgment of Jesus as Christ, Peter advanced toward the same position but slowly, through experience and often through conscious effort. As a consequence, while Paul stands in a class into which the modern man may but occasionally enter, the entire life of Peter is a lesson in the possibility of theological transition. His creed, "I believe Jesus is the Christ," never needed revision, so elementary was it; but the content of that creed was greater after each spiritual crisis through which he passed. His faith in Jesus was the central force of his life; but the implications of that faith grew ever more numerous, liberal and even radical. *Shailer Matthews,* in *Biblical World.*

Other Ways. The dawn of repentance in the soul comes in different way to different men. To some it comes with a sudden, overwhelming, irresistible power, in a great flash of lightning, and a sudden shuddering intuition of God's presence. To others it comes by some word of Holy Writ, falling unexpectedly into some open place in the heart of stone, as a sunbeam struggles into a dark rift between the rocks.

I have read of one who awoke to his desperate condition by hearing read the mere chapter of Scripture genealogy, whose many verses ending with "and he died" brought him face to face with death and the unseen world. I have heard of another who first began to think of spiritual things when his thoughts were arrested by the verse, "A living dog is better than a dead lion." He might be mean and low, he knew it; but at least he was living, and the meanest living has an opportunity which may have ceased to exist for the noblest dead. *F. W. Farrar.*

This is All. "There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." How familiar and how full of rich association these old words have grown. Try to think what their story must mean, what contribution it makes to the symphony of meaning in which all these attendants on the birth of Christ unite. Remember what is told us. They heard a song of angels, a voice from heaven telling them that a Saviour was born in Bethlehem, and that glory had come to God and peace had come to men. Then they simply stand looking at one another, as if in dumb wonder. Then they can only say to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this strange thing." Then they come and find Christ, and then they go abroad to tell other men about Him. That is all. There is a certain dumb, blind movement about all they do, yet with a certain simple, eager straightforwardness about it. They sing no psalm like Mary. They do not follow the star nor go to Herod like the wise men. They simply hear a voice from heaven telling them that there is a Saviour and where He is, and they say, "Let us go there." And they go there and they do find Him. I am sure that I need not tell you what an eternal element in Christian life they represent.

There will be many whose whole experience will be merely this: that, hungry, needy, empty, wanting a Saviour, they just heard a voice from heaven telling them that the Saviour whom they needed had come, and they just went to Him and found Him all they wanted, and then like the poor shepherds, "made known abroad" to other men all that had come to them. No doubt in their experience, simple as they seem, the whole richness of those others will really be included. But to the multitude of human souls Christ will be simply the Saviour revealed from heaven, and they will turn to Him almost as a creature shut up in the dark turns without thought, without plan or anticipation, to any corner of its darkness where a bright light suddenly shines. *Phillips Brooks, Sermons.*

Why standest thou as thou dost to Jesus Christ? "Why persecutest thou?" "And he was speechless," for no answer was possible. Why neglectest thou? Why forgettest thou? Why, admitting what thou dost, art thou not an out-and-out Christian? If we think of all our obligations and relations, and the facts of the universe, we come to the old saying, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And any man who fails to give his heart and life to Jesus Christ will one day have to say, "Behold, I have played the fool and erred ex-

ceedingly." Wake up, my brother, and apply calm reason to your lives while yet there is time, and face the question, Why dost thou stand as thou dost to Jesus Christ? There is nothing sadder than the small share that deliberate reason and intelligent choice have in the ordering of most men's lives. You live by impulse, by habit, by example, by constraint of the outward necessities of your position. But there are many who have very seldom, if ever, sat down and said, "Now, let me think until I get to the ultimate grounds of the course of life that I am pursuing." You can carry on the questions very gaily for a step or two, but then you come to a dead pause. "What do I do so-and-so for?" "Because I like it." "Why do I like it?" "Because it meets my needs, or my desires, or my tastes, or my intellect." Why do you make the meeting of your needs, or your desires, or your tastes, or your intellect, your sole object? Is there any answer to that? The Hindoos say the world rests on an elephant, and the elephant rests on a tortoise. What does the tortoise rest on? Nothing! Then that is what the world and the elephant rest on. And so, though you may go bravely through the first stage of the examination, when you come to the last question of all you will find out that your whole scheme of life is built upon a blunder; and the blunder is this, that anybody can be blessed without God. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Paul's Prayers.*

II Different Ways of Conversion

The Ethiopian's and Saul's Ways. Six weeks ago we had a lesson about Philip and the Ethiopian. You remember that the Ethiopian was reading the Word of God, that Philip joined him in his chariot and explained its meaning, telling him about Jesus as the Christ, and when they came to some water, he quietly said to Philip, "Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip baptized him and he went on his way rejoicing. In this quiet. deliberate way the Ethiopian met and answered the question, "Who art Thou, Lord?" and acknowledged that he believed Him to be the Christ, the Son of God.

This account of the Ethiopian's conversion, to use the word by which we are accustomed to express the change when one accepts Jesus as the Christ and dedicates himself to the service of God, is recorded by Luke in the last part of the eighth chapter of the Acts, and the account of the conversion of Saul begins our ninth chapter. What a contrast between the two men, and between the two conversions! "But Saul" are the words with which the first verse begins, and Luke's probable thought was the contrast between the extension of the Church at the hands of her disciples and the persecution of the church at the hands of her enemy, Saul, who was "yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." The great force of that *but,* however, is seen in the contrast between the Ethiopian's conversion and Saul's conversion. Saul's conviction that Jesus was an impostor was suddenly changed to a conviction that He is the Messiah, his hatred of Him was instantly transmitted into love for Him, his desire to persecute Jesus' followers turned in a flash into a desire to become himself a follower of the lowly Nazarene. His whole course was arrested and revolutionized in a moment.

Not every one is a Saul, and not every one can become a Paul. "Some people are converted like the flashing of a meteor; with others it is like the rising of the morning sun, and you can not tell the minute it was light," said one who of all men could best speak with authority on this question, Dwight L. Moody. There are some who have had an overwhelming sense of their sin and a sudden, definite expression of their forgiveness; there are others who have been led to God by a gradual appreciation of His goodness and can give neither the day nor the hour when first they knew and served Him.

The Child's Way. The current idea of the churches, which has only just begun to be dislodged, that adult conversion is the type and intended rule of Christianity, comes largely from the fact that the first preachers of Christianity had of necessity to be largely occupied with men who had known nothing of Christianity in their youth. Peter and Paul had to go to grown up men and ask them to begin Christian life. But surely that was not to be the perpetual picture of Christian culture.

The great Erasmus once wrote a piece in Latin for a boy to speak which had this last thought beautifully put: "We commemorate," so he taught the young declaimer with his bright eye and glowing face to say, "we boys commemorate the boy—pueri puerum—we commemorate our Master Jesus, that chief ideal of all, but yet peculiarly the chief of us—that is, of boys."

You can not teach a child that hatred of himself, you can not fill him with that sense of sin that sends the worn and weary sinner with his loads of sin staggering up to cast them down before the cross. The attempt to create such experiences in children either kills them with morbid misery or makes them dreadful little hypocrites. But this power of admiration in the child promises its own religion of its own natural kind. His are the years in which one can really believe in ideals. God can stand out before him, awful, yet dear; for to the child to whom all is mysterious, nearness and awfulness do not destroy one another as they do to us older folk. No doubt of God's faithfulness, no question of His ways comes in to cloud the perfectly unspotted adoration. How good it is that there are years at the beginning of every life when it is the most easy thing to believe in absolute right and goodness. How strange is it that we should not use those precious years for the attainment of their own appropriate and beautiful religion.

A child's religion is no monstrous thing. It is no priggish and unpleasant aping of what is possible only for the maturer life. It is a true child who loves God and sees everything beautiful in Him, who loves the Church and finds its ways and forms full of significance and pleasure, and who hears and accepts as part of the story of the world which it is gradually learning to know, the story of how God loved that world, so that He came into it and lived here and died here, to help every man to live in holiness and to save every man when he falls into sin. There is no child for whom that religion is impossible. Brave, true, frank, gentle, joyous, what is better than this in the labored religion of our later days? It is not only a promise, it is a present reality. The boy is not only a little man, he is a boy, with his own present capacity of character. He is even now, "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven." Condensed from *Visions and Tasks,* by *Phillips Brooks.*

III Missionary Topic Miracles of Grace

Marvelous Transformations. Ruskin bids us notice that the common mud from the streets of a manufacturing city is composed of clay, sand, soot, and water, and that the clay can be transformed into the sapphire, the sand transmuted into the opal, the soot crystalized into the diamond, and the water changed into a star of snow. Just as marvelous is the transformation of Saul, the haughty, self-righteous, persecuting Pharisee into Paul, the humble, penitent, zealous Christian.

Almost as striking was the conversion of St. Augustine. He himself has told in his "Confessions" about the sinful life he led, the unrest that came to his soul, the influence of the prayers of his mother, the sermons of Ambrose, the example of St. Anthony and the study of Cicero and Plato and Isaiah and Paul. In an agony of remorse he threw himself on the ground in his garden one day, and then heard a voice as from heaven saying to him, *Tolle, lege,* take and read. He sought a friend who placed in his hands Paul's epistles. He opened and read his exhortation to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." This, he felt, was the voice of God to him, and he obeyed. He became the greatest Christian teacher of his century.

St. Augustine's conversion has often been compared with Paul's, and so, too, has the story of Luther been recalled in this connection, when he was seeking relief for the anguish of his conscience by climbing on his knees up the Holy Stair at Rome and heard a voice—so distinctly that he wondered others did not hear it, too,—proclaiming to him that "the just shall live by faith." The voice was to him a messenger from God, and he arose at once and walked down the stair through the midst of the astonished worshippers.

A modern parallel was told by Rev. J. H. Ecob in the *Evangelist.* A depraved man who had given sixty years of his life to the worst of sins, was lying on his bed one day when the rafters overhead seemed to open and a company of

venerable men in white robes appeared in the room. They looked at him pitifully, until he "felt ashamed"; then they smiled at a white dove that had fluttered into the room and at the man on the bed. The scene faded away, but it left a lasting impression behind. For two days the man could not eat or sleep, and then he went to Mr. Ecob with the story. "I can't swear, I can't drink, nor steal, nor dare do a wicked thing, with them good old men's eyes lookin' at me, an the white bird stayin' right in my heart," he cried with the tears running down his cheeks! The man could not read, he had never been in a church, he scarcely knew there was such a book as the Bible. Mr. Ecob taught him about Jesus, and he lived an honest, upright life for several years. When he was dying he declared that "The white dove was in his heart."

No One too Low for Salvation. It has sometimes been said that certain races are so low in the scale of humanity, their lives are so close to the brutes, that it is impossible to save them. Said a traveler before a Foreign Missionary Convention: "When I first saw the inhabitants of Fernando Po, observed their filthiness, and heard their speech, like the grunting of brute animals, I confess I could not imagine their becoming Christians; but a little later I was privileged to visit a Christian town wholly inhabited by this tribe, and in their own church in the midst of their village of cleanly homes I heard them sing the familiar hymns of Christendom and offer reverent, intelligent prayer. Then I knew that there is no humanity too low for the gospel to uplift."

A Changed Opinion. Mr. Darwin had often expressed to me his conviction that it was utterly useless to send missionaries to such a set of savages as the Fuegians. I had always replied that I did not believe any human beings too low to comprehend the simple message of the gospel of Christ. After many years he wrote to me that the recent account of the mission showed that he had been wrong and I right, and he requested me to forward to the Society an enclosed check for five pounds as a testimony of his interest in their good work. *Admiral Sir James Sullivan.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Ah, for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be! *Tennyson.*

The great change in conversion is wrought on the will, and consists in the resignation of that to Christ. *Matthew Henry.*

Turning to God, submitting himself to God—that is man's duty; being made a new man, being spiritually renewed, being given a clearer sight,—that is a blessing from above. *Sunday School Times.*

Blind to all else is he who sees
The vision of the Lord. *Whittier.*

It is said that every man goes, at some time in his life, to Damascus—the place of the last decision. *Alexander McKenzie.*

You may avoid the church, you may avoid the Bible, and you may avoid the company of Christian people, but you can not avoid Jesus Christ: He will meet you where you least think of Him. *W. J. Dawson.*

Though heralded with naught of fear
Of outward sign or show;
Though only to the inward ear
It whispers soft and low;
Though dropping, as the manna fell,
Unseen, yet from above,
Noiselessly as dewfall, heed it well,—
Thy Father's call of love. *Whittier.*

Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John 20.29.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

How Paul was transformed has been variously interpreted, but no one has questioned the fact that he *was* transformed. It is of little moment when or

where or how one has been converted; the great question is, whether or not he is converted. He can answer this question by comparing the purpose of his heart with that of Paul; does he, like Paul, ask, "What shall I do, Lord?" He who makes God's will his law has been genuinely converted.

We need never question our own spiritual experiences because they differ from those of others.

In many Sunday-schools one day in the year is set apart as "Decision Day," the day on which an especial appeal is made to scholars to decide to serve God. Why wait for that day?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

After the death of Stephen, Saul persecuted and scattered the church in Jerusalem. Not content with this, but still more enraged against the disciples who were spreading a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus in the lands to which they were driven, Saul determined to follow them and uproot the heresy. Armed with letters of authority from the high priest to the synagogue in Damascus, he started for that city, intending to sieze men and women who were believers in Jesus and bring them to Jerusalem for trial before the Sanhedrin.

As he was approaching Damascus, there suddenly shone round about him a dazzling light, brighter than the Syrian sun; he fell to the earth and heard a voice calling to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" "Who are thou, Lord?" he questioned, and the solemn answer came, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; but rise and enter the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." What a revelation to the zealous Pharisee! Jesus lives; He is the Messiah; in persecuting Stephen and the disciples he has been persecuting the Saviour! The others with him had heard the voice, but they saw no one. When Saul arose blinded by the vision, they led him by the hand into Damascus. Instead of persecuting the Christians, the proud Pharisee was led along as a little child, and for three days he remained in darkness, seeing nothing, and unable to eat or drink.

To one of the disciples at Damascus, Ananias by name, a divine revelation came directing him to go to the house of Judas on a street called Straight and lay his hands on Saul. Ananias knew about Saul's persecution of believers in Jerusalem, and about his purpose in coming to Damascus, and he hesitated to obey the command, but when he was told that Saul had been chosen by Christ to witness for Him before "the Gentiles and kings and children of Israel," he went at once. "Brother Saul" said he, as he laid his hands on him, "The Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. At once Saul's sight was restored, and he arose and was baptized by one of the humble disciples whose death he had come to accomplish. Thus in a wonderful way, either by an inward revelation or by an outward miraculous appearance, the zealous persecutor of Jesus was changed into the equally zealous follower of his Lord.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Was Saul's conversion the result of a sudden perception that he was fighting on the wrong side, or was it a final yielding of his will for which he had been prepared by meditation on Stephen's words and death?

2. Varieties of Religious Experience. See Professor Henry James' book bearing this title, or Dr. F. A. Noble's "Typical New Testament Conversions."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Review the lesson about the martyrdom of Stephen. 2. Review the proclaiming of the gospel in Samaria and to the Ethiopian. 3. What have you heard about Barnabas in an earlier lesson? (Lesson VI, 1st quarter.) 4. What is said about him in Acts 9.26, 27? 5. What was the probable object of the church in Jerusalem in sending Barnabas to Antioch? 6. Whom had they sent to investigate the situation in Samaria? (Acts 8.14.) 7. Was Barnabas a Palestinian Jew? (Acts 4.36.) 8. On what occasions is the word *Christian* used in the New Testament? (See your Bible Concordance.) 9. By what names are the followers of Christ called in the New Testament? (Acts 9.1; 9.2; 9.41; 11.1; Eph. 1.1.) 10. Why did Barnabas bring Saul to Antioch? 11. What else is told about Agabus? (See Subject-Index of Bible.)

LESSON IV—APRIL 25

THE GOSPEL IN ANTIOCH

Read Acts 11.19-30; 12.25. Commit verses 22, 23.

Golden Text

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Acts 11.26.

LESSON TEXT Acts 11.19-30; 12.25

19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord. 22 And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: 23 who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: 24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

27 Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. 29 And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa: 30 which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

19. *They therefore.* See Acts 8.1-4.

20. *Greeks.* The interpretation of this whole event hinges upon the meaning given to this word. There are two words in the Greek: (1) Ἑλληνιστής, Hellenistes, is a Grecian, a Hellenist or Greek Jew, a Jew by descent and training and religion, but born outside of Palestine under Greek influence, and (2) Ἕλλην, Hellenis, is a Greek, a Gentile. Both words occur in different manuscripts. The Revisers accept the second word, and the interpretation thereof is that the gospel was preached to the Gentiles. The contrast is between preaching "only to Jews," verse 19, and preaching to Gentiles. Hellenists and Hebrews, J. Vernon Bartlet well remarks, may be contrasted (as in 6.1) as two species of the genus Jew; but "Jews and Hellenists" is as poor an antithesis as "English and Colonists."

21. *The name of the Lord.* "Compare Luke 1.66. The hand is a symbol of power; here probably, as in 4.30, it was stretched forth to heal, thus affording a manifest sign of divine approval" (*Abbott*).

23. *Had seen the grace of God.* This may refer to the genuineness of the conversion of the Gentiles, or to the manifestation of the Spirit as in 10.45.

24. *Full of the Holy Spirit.* Compare 6.5. "The Spirit has sovereign sway."

25. *And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul.* He had been commissioned to preach to the Gentiles, 9.15.

26. *Even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church.* "This long period, spent with success in the first field where the preaching to the Gentiles had begun, will account for the constant return to Antioch after each missionary journey of the Apostle of the Gentiles" (*Lumby*).

27. *Prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.* They were recognized as inspired teachers. "The prophet was not necessarily a foreteller. The Hebrew word is derived from a root signifying *to boil* or *bubble over,* and simply conveys the idea of the bursting forth, as of a fountain, of truth with which God has inspired the spirit. In the New Testament Paul gives some detailed discription of prophesying, which is distinguished from what we should call preaching, only in that the presence and power of God is perhaps more prominent" (*Abbott*).

28. *Agabus.* Referred to again in 21.10.—*Over all the world.* The Roman world.—*Claudius.* He was the Roman emperor from 41 to 54 A. D. There were several famines during his reign. Josephus gives an account of a severe famine in Palestine between 44 and 48.

29. *According to his ability.* Compare Paul's directions in 1 Cor. 16.1-3.

30. *The elders.* "If, as is probable, the apostles were now no longer concentrated at Jerusalem, but were engaged in missionary work throughout Palestine, they would be replaced in the Jerusalem Church in ordinary circumstances by a body of elders, men of weight and counsel, at whose head stood James the Lord's brother, while in other churches 'the elders' would be the natural leaders and the administrators of any relief fund" (*Bartlet*).

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

23. *When he had seen the grace of God, he was glad.* Our own type of denominational character—and there is such a thing—comes to be accepted by us as the all exclusive ideal of a devout man; and we have not imagination enough to believe in the goodness which does not speak our dialect, nor see with our eyes. Dogmatical narrowness has built as high walls as ceremonial Christianity round the fold of Christ. And the one deliverance for us all from the transferred selfishness, which has so much to do with shaping all these wretched, narrow theories of the Church, is to do as this man did—open our eyes with sympathetic eagerness to see God's grace in many an unexpected place, and square our theories with His dealings. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *The Secret of Power.*

24. *A good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.* It begins with the surface—"He was a good man"; and then cuts a little deeper—"full of the Holy Spirit." That is why "he was a good man." And then it goes deeper still—"and of faith"; and that is why he was full of the Holy Spirit. One has sometimes seen anatomical models, where one lifts off the top piece that represents skin and flesh, and lays bare the deeper-seated organs. Luke5s analysis here is somewhat like these. It gives a vertical section, that discloses the strata—not only the grass, and the "light of laughing flowers" on the surface, but the underlying soils which nourish these. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Last Sheaves.*

29. *Which they did.* This collection was the palpable evidence that in the heathen world a new spirit, a spirit of love and brotherhood, had sprung up. For this collection is the hand of fellowship which for the first time the Gentiles held out to Israel across the old gulf of separation. *Baumgarten,* in *Apostolic History.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

19. *They that were scattered abroad travelled as far as Antioch.* It is probable that they were poor, and depended for their food and lodging on the hospitality of the people on the way. A modern traveler says that the "Arabs are still as fond as ever of exercising the virtue of hospitality, but they take special care to entertain only such as can pay a round sum for the accommodation, or give their host a good dinner in return. The impecunious stranger may, it is true, claim the traditional three day's board and lodging, but he must be con-

tent with the scraps and prepared to hear very outspoken hints of the undesirability of his presence."

26. *With the church.* The word *church* as used in the Acts refers to the community of believers, not to a building, but as there is no mention of a synagogue here at Antioch it has been thought that the Christians of Antioch were the first to possess a proper *ecclesia* or church of their own.

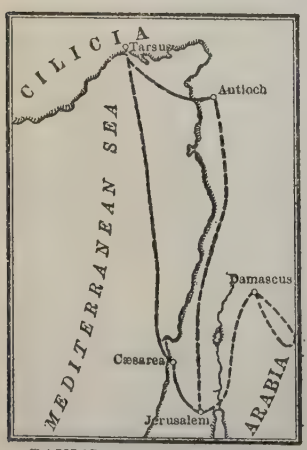
29. *The disciples determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa.* The wealthier Jews of the Dispersion were accustomed to send relief to the poorer Jews of Palestine during times of famine or trouble. In this case the Gentile Christians joined with the Jewish Christians in sending relief to the Christians in Palestine, who would not be likely to receive aid through the orthodox Jews. Josephus records the fact that Helena, queen of Adiabene, and her son, who were Jewish proselytes, sent large supplies of food to Judea during this very famine.

Mr. Gamahliel Wad-El-Ward sees in the Jewish custom of sending money to the Palestine Jews a reason for the laziness that so largely prevails to-day among the Jews of the cities of Palestine. In his book, "Palestine through the Eyes of a Native," he says: "The Jews are taught to be lazy and unthrifty from their infancy; for every man, woman and child, from the day of his birth to his death, receives a certain sum per week from a fund known as the *Halooka,* sent from all the Jews in the different parts of the world for the maintenance of their brethren in the Holy Land, and for which they expect the residents of Canaan to pray for them when near the Holy Places, and to be their proxy at their fast on the day of Atonement and at their rejoicings on the day of the Passover."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After Saul's conversion he needed time for meditation and communion with God, to prepare himself for the work to which he was called. "When it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles," he says in his Epistle to the Galatians, "Straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia and again I returned unto Damacus." It is supposed by some that he went to Mount Sinai, but he may have gone no farther than the desert region near Damascus, which might be called "Arabia." In the Acts there is no mention of these three years in Arabia, but Luke does not give a full account of Paul's life.

Paul preached in the synagogues of Damascus, proclaiming Jesus to be the son of God, and was soon compelled to flee, for the Jews sought to kill him. They watched the gates of the city day and night, but Paul's friends lowered him from the wall in a basket. Paul then went to Jerusalem. The disciples there were afraid of him until Barnabas assured them that Paul "had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus." Another plot of the Jews to kill him at Jerusalem was learned in time; he escaped to Cæsarea, and returned to his home in Tarsus. We do not meet him again till Barnabas seeks him in Tarsus and brings him to Antioch. This is, perhaps, the generally accepted view. Since Luke, however, says nothing about the "three years in Arabia," for they had nothing to do with the public history of the Church, the chronological order of events can not be given with certainty.



PAUL'S EARLY JOURNEYS

In chapters 9 and 10 we are told the result in Palestine of the preaching of believers who were driven from Jerusalem by Saul's persecution after the death of Stephen; we now take up the result of the preaching of others who fled beyond Palestine, as far as Antioch in Syria. See map.

The date of the journey of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem with relief funds is generally given as 44 or 45 A. D. Dr. Ramsay dates it a year later, and identifies it with the visit mentioned by Paul in Galatians 2.1-10. The necessity of having it agree with Paul's account in Galatians is avoided by the natural supposition that Paul there does not relate all his visits to Jerusalem, but only those important for his argument in that epistle.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Phœnicia was the important commercial district about fifteen miles broad that extended for one hundred and twenty miles along the Mediterranean coast north of Palestine; at this time it formed a part of the Roman province of Syria. Antioch in the Northern part of Syria, sixteen miles from the coast, was the capital of the province and one of the largest and wealthiest cities of the Roman Empire. Cyprus is the large island in the northeastern end of the Mediterranean. Cyrene was the capital of Libya, the country west of Egypt. Tarsus was in Cilicia, the district along the coast in the southeastern part of Asia Minor.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In February we had a lesson about a man and his wife who sold a piece of property and pretended to give the entire amount received to the apostles for the relief of the poor. Who were they? In contrast to their hypocrisy Luke told about another man who brought the whole sum received from the sale of a field. Who was he? When Saul went back to Jerusalem after his journey to Damascus, he tried to join the disciples, but they were afraid of him, for they knew how he had persecuted the Christians. Then this same man, Barnabas, befriended him, and told the disciples how Saul had been changed from a persecutor to a follower of Jesus Christ. To-day we hear again about Barnabas. To what city is he sent by the Church at Jerusalem? Find the two cities on your map. About how far apart are they? Is Antioch in Palestine? To what empire do both cities belong? Who had gone from Jerusalem to Antioch before Barnabas? Why?

For Older Pupils. The history of the Christian Church during its first hundred years has been aptly called a tale of three cities—Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome. The tale of Jerusalem as the center of Christian activity for fifteen years after the ascension of Jesus, we have now finished, and to-day we take up the tale of Antioch. Hitherto the Jews, with a few exceptions, have been the only believers in Jesus as the Christ; now the Gospel is carried to the Gentiles in Antioch and thence to the great cities of Asia Minor and Greece and Italy.

Christianity appeared at first as a development of Judaism. "Here in the Syrian capital of Antioch," to quote the words of Dr. Matheson, "the differences which the home atmosphere had failed to reveal were brought clearly into view. It began to break upon the minds of men, to break upon the minds of the first disciples themselves, that although Judaism might be regarded as a germinal Christianity, Christianity was far more than a developed Judaism." Dr. Matheson then compares the course of Christianity to a road up to the summit of a hill; looking down from the summit one can see that the road whence he came is not the only way by which this spot might have been reached. At Antioch Christianity had reached the top of the hill by the road which the Jews had supposed to be the only road, but they discovered yet other roads leading to the same goal. "Hitherto it had believed itself to be simply the flower of Judaism, but at Antioch it discovered that it was the flower of the religious spirit itself. Hitherto it had imagined that men could only approach it through the gate of the temple, but at Antioch it discovered that the gate of the temple was only one of a multitude of avenues. Its votaries were no longer seen following one common track. The Jew still sought it by the old familiar portal, still professed to hold that it lay through the gate of his own national worship. But the representatives of Gentile nations claimed each his own gate and refused to pass through the ancient avenue. They came from all directions."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Cleave unto the Lord with Purpose of Heart

The Meaning of Barnabas' Exhortation. The Greek word translated *purpose* means literally *setting forth,* and is the word in Matthew 12.4 translated *shew-bread,* "the loaves of the setting-forth," the loaves set before, or consecrated to, God. Their hearts were to be consecrated to God. The Greek word *cleave* is translated *continue* in Acts 13.43, and the exhortation is that of Jesus Himself when He said "Abide in me." Jesus is the living Lord, ever present with His disciples, to Him they are to cleave, with hearts consecrated to God's service. If Jews and Greeks carried out this exhortation of Barnabas, there would be no trouble among them, for they would all live together in Christian unity, sons of one Father, brothers of one Lord.

A Confession of Faith. Lord Bacon uses a striking phrase—"Bed-ridden Truths." One of the truths which many Christians held so lightly that for them it has become bed-ridden, weak, ineffectual, having no influence over their lives, is the truth that Jesus proclaimed when He said, "Lo, I am with you always." They do not cleave unto Him.

In what Mr. Watson Gilder calls "The Story of a Heathen, Sojourning in Galilee in A. D. 32," he shows what a grip upon this truth every one may have as well as this man who had seen and heard Jesus while He lived on earth, and who afterwards thought about that wonderful life and said;

> "If Jesus be a man and only a man,
> Then of all mankind I cling to Him,
> And to Him will I cleave alway.
> If Jesus Christ be God and only God,
> I swear I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
> The earth, the sea, and the air."

How we may cleave to the Lord. One plain way is by habitual direction of thought to Him, by cultivating the sense of His presence. It is hard amid the whirl and press, but it is possible. How do we keep near dear ones on earth who are absent? Only by thinking about them, and we do not need, if we really love them, to be told to think about them; we can not help it. In the same way, if we are to keep ourselves in that close personal relation to the Christ "whom having not seen we love," there must be a great deal more actual occupation of our minds and thoughts with Him than is usual amongst professing Christians. The bulk of our lives is necessarily devoted to temporal things, and, unless we can bring about an alliance between daily work and heavenly thoughts, our hold on Christ will be slack. We cleave to the Lord by obedience also. A little disobedience makes a great separation. We cleave to Him by depending on Him, as a cragsman clutches the rope which keeps him from being dashed to pieces on the sharp reef, or drowned in the heaving billows far below. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Leaves from the Tree of Life.*

II Called Christians

The Name. It came to pass, says the historian, that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Hitherto the disciples had been to the Gentiles only a Jewish sect, for they were practically all Jews or Jewish proselytes. Now, however, great numbers of Gentiles have become disciples, and a name is needed which shall include both Jews and Gentiles, and shall be descriptive of their creed. The thought had never come to the disciples themselves that they were founders of a new religion. They no more meant to separate from the Church of Judea than John Wesley meant to separate from the Church of England, to employ an oft-used comparison. They called themselves disciples, learners, saints, consecrated to God; the faithful, or believers, full of faith in Jesus as the Christ; brethren, sons of one Father. The new term of *Christians* was not adopted by them during the history recorded in the Acts. It is used only twice again in the New Testament: once, when King Agrippa accuses Paul of thinking that he can easily make "a Christian" of him (Acts 26.28); and once

when Peter speaks of suffering "as a Christian" (1 Peter 4.16), when he evidently quotes the term as one used by their enemies.

It is a disputed question whether or not the people of Antioch gave the name in derision. It has been thought by many that the nickname was given in the same spirit as since then have been given the now honored names of Puritan, Wesleyan, Methodist, Protestant. The Greek word for Christ is χριστός, Christos, and it is very similar to another Greek word χρηστός, Chrestos, which was sometimes used ironically for "a good fellow." The people of Antioch were noted for their witty epigrams, and in their term of χριστιανοί, Christianoi, there may have been a play upon the words. On the other hand, it may have been only natural that they should have called the followers of Christ, Christ's-men, just as they called the followers of Pompey, Pompey's-men, or Pompeiani.

Civis Romanus sum! I am a Roman citizen! was the proud claim which in all lands at this time produced especial rights and favors. χριστιανὸς εἰμί! I am a Christian! became later the equally proud claim which produced grievous tortures and even death. It had become a sacred name when Julian became Roman emperor in the middle of the fourth century. He wished to revive the old Jewish term of contempt, and called the Christians "Galileans," even trying to enforce the change by a public decree. His successor, Jovian, declared himself a Christian, and one of his first decrees was the celebrated edict which placed the Christian religion on a legal basis.

Who have a Right to be called Christians. It is a long road from Peter the fisherman to Peter the martyr. A long, long road from the child in the kindergarten to the senior in the university. But the Peter who first heard Christ's "Follow me" and obeyed was just as truly in the school of Jesus as Peter the ripe and venerable apostle; the little tot in the kindergarten is just as much in the realm of education as the university graduate on Commencement Day.

I am not telling you how to be a perfect Christian all in a moment; but how to begin to be an imperfect Christian right here and now. A man can not make a complete journey in an instant, but he can begin instantly.

"But," you say, "what right have I to call myself a Christian if I do not measure up to the New Testament standard? What right have I to enroll myself as a loyal soldier if I do not obey my great Captain's commands?" It is enough to reply that no child is turned out of school for one bad lesson, or two, or a dozen, if the teacher knows that, on the whole, the child is trying to be a good pupil, and is daily striving to overcome his dulness. No boy or girl is ever expelled from the home because he or she fails to come up to the ideal of filial obedience and affection.

If when you begin to be a Christian you mean to obey, mean to be honest and earnest, mean to resist evil, mean to do and be the right thing; if you are pained when you go astray, wounded when you do wrong and seek always to do better, Christ will take your will for the deed, your purpose for your performance, and the ruling choice of your life will be counted unto you for righteousness. Condensed from an article by *Dr. Robert F. Coyle,* in the *Homiletic Review.*

III Missionary Topic Giving

How to give. When Agabus had foretold the great famine, "the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea." As Paul said afterwards in regard to a collection for the same purpose sent by those of Macedonia and Achaia, "It hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things."

From the *Canadian Congregationalist* comes this lesson on how to give, founded on verses 29 and 30: It was universal—every man; proportionate—according to his ability; voluntarily—determined; practical—to send relief; prompt—which they did; business-like—*to* the right people *by* the right people; done lovingly—to brethren.

The Effect of Giving on the Giver. An artist was once asked how he would portray a dying church. Would he picture a small, scattered congrega-

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tion worshipping in a building that was falling to pieces? Instead, he said, the canvas should show a magnificent edifice, with a great organ, richly carved pulpit, and beautiful windows. The striking objects within should be two—a large collection plate in the hands of a Church official, and on the wall a small box marked "Collection for Foreign Missions" with a huge cobweb over the opening! That church keeps its life and its wealth which gives away its energy and its money in noble causes. Mr. John R. Mott has tersely stated the truth in "The Pastor and Modern Missions": "In the interest of the Kingdom of Christ greater than the need of securing contributions is the need of securing contributors. Right practices in giving emancipate one from selfishness, make possible the larger manifestation of the power of Christ in one's life, and develops world-conquering power. It might be possible to double the amount given by a church without increasing its spirituality and power; but it would be impossible to multiply the number of members who give in the right spirit without immensely augmenting that church's spiritual life and achieving ability."

A Few Comparisons. On an average every German contributes four cents to foreign missions and one and one-fourth cents to home missions, while he spends seven dollars for beer alone, and twelve dollars for wine, whiskey and beer together. What a pitiful state of affairs!

The whole Christian world of 150,000,000 contributes only some $17,000,000 for missions. The State of New York, with a population of nearly 8,000,000 pays nearly $17,000,000 every year in licenses for the privilege of selling liquor, not for the liquor itself. The liquor dealers must make considerably more than this amount in order to pay the income tax. *The Missionary Review of the World.*

A Young African Girl's Gift. Mr. J. Campbell White, in an address delivered at the Student Volunteer Convention held at Nashville, told of a wonderful gift from a young convert on the West Coast of Africa. Christmas day was being observed by the bringing of gifts "for Christ." The people were very poor. Some brought a handful of vegetables, some a few flowers, and the one who brought a coin worth a penny brought what was accounted a very valuable gift. This sixteen year old girl handed the missionary a coin worth eighty-five cents in American money. He was so astonished that he hesitated to accept it, thinking she could not have obtained it honestly. After the service, in reply to his question, she told him that she wished to give an offering to Christ that satisfied her own heart, and she had gone to a neighboring planter and bound herself out to him for the rest of her life as a slave in return for this money, and had brought it all to Christ.

SENTENCE SERMONS

To be a Christian is first and last and midst a personal relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. *Robert F. Coyle.*

It is a great blessing given by God to be in a position to do good to others. *Cyprian.*

The only reason why Christianity does not possess the world is because Christ does not possess Christianity. *J. Campbell White.*

The world is all my neighborhood, the stars are foreign lands. *Christian Endeavor World.*

No Church ought to call itself thoroughly aggressive and evangelical that does not expend for the support of missions at large at least one dollar for every five it expends on itself. *Joseph Cook.*

To be in relations not with God alone but with one's fellows, and to serve God in serving them, that is to be a Christian. *A. C. McGiffert.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

We are called Christians. Are we akin to our acknowledged Leader? Are we doing anything that would lead others to know that we are His followers? Does our own knowledge of our motives and our ruling choice bear witness within that we are Christians in reality?

The Indian chief of Alaska who said "I have given my whole heart—not half

of it—to the Lord," knew what it means to "cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart." Do we know?

In the Church at Antioch Christianity changed from a Jewish to a world-wide religion. That Church was begun by unnamed "men of Cyprus and Cyrene" who on their arrival at Antioch at once began "preaching the Lord Jesus" to the Greeks there. Had you been one of those men, would you have said that you were not an apostle, and you could not be expected to do much for the cause?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

After the death of Stephen, persecution drove the disciples away from Jerusalem, and some of them went northward to Phœnicia and Antioch in Syria and Cyprus. Among the men who came to Antioch were some Hellenists, Jews of the island of Cyprus and of the city of Cyrene in Africa, who, more liberal-minded than the Palestinian Jews, proclaimed the good news, Jesus is the Christ, to the Greeks of that city. Report reached the Church at Jerusalem that a great number of these Gentiles had turned unto the Lord and had been accepted in the Church there without becoming Jewish proselytes. They sent Barnabas to investigate the situation. He was a good man, full of faith, and when he saw the evidence that "the hand of the Lord" was in this new movement, he rejoiced, and exhorted them all to remain steadfast in their union with Christ. So many were added to the Church that Barnabas needed assistance in teaching them. He knew just the right man for the place, the Pharisee Saul whom he had vouched for before the Church at Jerusalem, a Hellenist like himself, one who knew the Greek language and was familiar with Greek culture and thought. He sought and found him at Tarsus, and brought him to Antioch. And so it came to pass that the man who was instrumental in driving away from Jerusalem the disciples who founded this Church at Antioch came to Antioch to help them in their work.

During the year that Paul and Barnabas spent with the Church, it grew so rapidly in numbers that a new name was needed to designate the community that was no longer a Jewish sect, and the followers of Christ here first received the name of Christians.

During this time prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch and one of them, Agabus by name, foretold a great famine in the days of the emperor Claudius. The disciples of Antioch, Jews and Gentiles, every one who was able, determined to send relief to "the brethren" in Judea. They made their collection and sent it by Barnabas and Paul, who fulfilled their mission and returned again to Antioch, bringing with them a young man named John Mark.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul's varied experiences in preparation for his life's work. Acts 9.19-30; Gal. 1.15-24; II Cor. 11.32, 33. From the Advanced Course, Int. Lessons.
2. Paul's motives, methods, and results in his work in behalf of the poor of Jerusalem.
3. Modern relief measures.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What was the first Church interested in foreign missions? 2. What is your Church doing for foreign missions? 3. Who were the first foreign missionaries? 4. When Jesus set apart the twelve for special work what did He do? (Luke 6.12, 13.) 5. What does Paul call himself in Romans 1.1? 6. What is said about Paul's "calling" in Acts 9.15? 7. In what ways had Barnabas shown fitness for the work? 8. What did Paul say about John Mark in his letter to Timothy? (II Tim. 4.11.) 9. What have we already learned about missionaries in Cyprus? (Acts 11.19.) 10. About workers from Cyprus on the mainland? (Acts 11.20.) 11. To what country does Cyprus now belong? (Great Britain.) 12. What is said about sorcery in Deut. 18.9-14?

LESSON V—MAY 2

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY—CYPRUS

Read Acts 13.1-12. Commit verses 2, 3.

Golden Text

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. Mark 16.15.

LESSON TEXT Acts 13.1-12

1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there,* prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John as their attendant. 6 And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus; 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. 9 But Saul, who is also *called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him, 10 and said, O full of all guile and all villiany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *In the church that was there.* The community of Christians, not a building. —Prophets and teachers. "The rabbis of the Christian church" (*Rackham*). See 1 Cor. 12.28.—*Manaen the foster-brother of Herod.* Nothing is known about Symeon, Lucius, or Manaen. The Herod was Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee.

2. *And as they ministered to the Lord.* They ministered to, or served, the Lord by their prayers and worship.—*The Spirit said.* The forward movement was divinely ordained.—*The work whereunto I have called them.* The mission to the Gentiles. See Rom. 1.1.

3. *And when they had fasted and prayed.* Compare Luke 6.12, 13.—*Laid their hands on them.* The prophets and teachers dedicated them to the work.

4. *Being sent forth by the Holy Spirit.* Working through the prophets and teachers, as told in verse 3. See Acts 15.28.

5. *They had also John as their attendant.* This is John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4.10), the author of the second Gospel.

6. *Sorcerer.* The Greek word is *magus,* or *wise-man.*—*Bar-Jesus.* "A Hebrew word meaning Son of Joshua." Jesus was a common Jewish name.

7. *The proconsul, Sergius Paulus.* There were two classes of Roman provinces, imperial and senatorial. The imperial were under the control of the em-

peror, and governed by *proprætors* who were entrusted with an army; the senatorial were under the control of the senate, and governed by *proconsuls* who had no military power. Cyprus had been an imperial province until 22 A. D., but at this time was a senatorial province, as extant coins of the reign of Claudius declare.

8. *Elymas.* "Elymas is an Arabic word which means *wise man,* and corresponds to *ulema,* the Arabic name for a theological student."—*Turn aside the proconsul from the faith.* From believing the word of God, verse 7.

9. *But Saul, who is also called Paul.* Several explanations have been given of the change of name. Paul is the Romanized form of Saul, and it may be that among the Jews he had always been known as Saul, and among the Greeks as Paul. It is the first time the name Paul occurs in the Acts, but from this time onward Luke uses this name only. The changed name emphasizes the changed work of the apostle.

10. *Guile.* "The Greek word rendered *guile* primarily means a bait for fish; then, any deception; then, a desire or disposition to deceive" (*Abbott*).—*Thou son of the devil.* Not "Bar-Jesus," son of Jesus.

11. *The hand of the Lord.* The manifestation of God's power.

12. *Then the proconsul...believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.* He was convinced that the miracle was wrought through Christ's power.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1. *The foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch.* In the days of the apostles, and as long as Christianity was a proscribed religion, the numbers of the wealthy and learned and powerful belonging to it were still comparatively few, and the body of the membership of the Church consisted of the humbler and middle ranks of society. The wealthy and noble must always be few in comparison with others in the Church, for this if for no other reason, that there are fewer of them. Even yet the greater part of our Christian congregations does not consist of nobles and millionaires, but of persons drawn from the intermediate and humble classes of society. *James Orr.*

3. *When they had fasted and prayed.* The source of the spiritual vitality and power of any Christian movement is prayer. Our hope and confidence in this enterprise of world-wide missions are chiefly placed, not in the extent and strength of the missionary organization; not in the number and power of the missionary force; not in the fulness of the treasury and in well-appointed material equipment; not in the achievements of the past, even those of a spiritual character; not in the experience acquired by centuries of Christian missions; not in the methods and agencies which have been devised; not in the brilliancy and popularity of the leaders of the missionary movement at home and abroad; not in statesmanlike and far-sighted policies and plans; not in enthusiastic forward movements and inspiring watchwords—on none of these considerations do we rely principally, for it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." The source of the power of any spiritual movement is God, and the energies of God are released in answer to prayer. *John R. Mott,* in *The Pastor and Modern Missions.*

12. *Then the proconsul believed.* It is commonly supposed that when he *believed* Serjius Paulus became a Christian. But it would have made a great stir in the Church and the world of which some echo must have reached us. For one thing, it would have been almost impossible for Paulus to continue in his office, which involved official patronage of idolatrous worship. It was quite possible to believe, like Simon Magus (Acts 8.13) in the reality of the divine power, without being converted in heart. At the sight of the judgment on Elymas, Paulus would rather have been filled with fear, and he would have thought it safer to leave these dangerous questions and prophetic rivalries alone. In any case he had no more dealings with the apostles, who leave Cyprus, instead of seizing the great opportunity which a real conversion would have given them. *R. B. Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *When they had fasted.* There was only one fast, the day of Atonement, ap-

pointed in the law. But it had become the practice for pious Jews to fast twice a week, and it was natural that those who became Christians should continue the habit. The fasting of the anniversary of the Lord's death and burial is, no doubt, the raison d'être (apart from the natural suggestion of self-discipline) of Christian fasting. These days were kept as strict fasts from the beginning. *R. B. Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles.*

6. *A certain sorcerer who was with the proconsul.* For many years before this time, and many years after, impostors from the East, pretending to magical powers, had great influence over the Roman mind. All the Greek and Latin literature of the empire, from Horace to Lucian, abounds in proof of the prevalent credulity of this skeptical period. The faith of educated Romans was utterly gone. We can hardly wonder, when the East was thrown open,—the land of mystery,—that the imagination both of the populace and the aristocracy of Rome became fanatically excited, and that they greedily welcomed the most absurd and degrading superstitions.

Every part of the East contributed its share to the general superstition. The gods of Egypt and Phrygia found unfailing votaries. The more remote districts of Asia Minor sent their itinerant sooth-sayers; Syria sent her music and her medicines; Chaldea her "Babylonian numbers" and "Mathematical Calculations." The Jewish beggar-woman was the gypsy of the first century, shivering and crouching in the outskirts of the city, and telling fortunes, as Ezekiel said of old, "for handfuls of barley, and for pieces of bread" (Ezek. 13.19). The great Marius had in his camp a Syrian, probably a Jewish, prophetess, by whose divinations he regulated the progress of his campaigns. As Brutus, at the beginning of the Republic, had visited the oracle of Delphi, so Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar, at the close of the republic, when the oracles were silent, sought information from oriental astrology. No picture of the great Latin satirist Juvenal is more powerfully drawn than that in which he shows us the Emperor Tiberius "sitting on the rock of Capri with his flock of Chaldeans round him." Condensed from *Life and Epistles of Saint Paul,* by *Conybeare and Howson.*

9. *Saul, who is also called Paul.* I have adopted the opinion that Saul's parents gave him this double name in order that one should recall his Jewish ancestry, while the other, being borrowed from the Gentile speech, might facilitate his dealings with the pagan world. In all periods the children of Israel have been studious of such means of furthering their interest with the foreigners among whom they were forced to live. The Hellenist Jews likewise had Greek forms for their names. The *Abbé Constant Fouard.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Last week we heard how the Church at Antioch set apart their money for the benefit of the home Church at Jerusalem; to-day we hear how they set apart their men for foreign missionary work. Paul begins his Epistle to the Romans by calling himself "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." His call to be an apostle to the Gentiles he had received when on the way to Damascus. The vision of Christ came to him (Acts 26.16-18). That call is now ratified by the Church at Antioch, at a special service where by fasting and prayer they sought to learn the will of God.

The departure of Paul on his first missionary journey marks a great epoch in Christian progress. We have seen the gospel preached to the Samaritans, have heard of Philip's baptizing the Ethiopian, of Peter's message to Cornelius the Roman centurion, of the admission of the Gentiles into the Church at Antioch, but now, for the first time, a deliberate plan is made to carry the good news to distant lands. The mission is first to the Jews, but before many months have passed, it becomes distinctly a mission to the Gentiles.

The first missionary journey began in the year 47 A. D., according to our chronology. Some scholars give 45 A. D. as the date.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

We now take up the first of Paul's three great missionary journeys. From Antioch in Syria he went with Barnabas and John Mark down the river

Orontes by boat, or along the shore by land, to Seleucia, the port on the coast. Thence they sailed southwestward to the island of Cyprus, which is about eighty miles away. They landed at Salamis on the east, and preached in the synagogues there. Then they went across the island, a distance of about one hundred and ten miles, to Paphos, on the western coast. Paphos was the capital of the island.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When Robert Moffat was leaving his home in Scotland as a young lad, his mother asked him to promise her that every night before lying down to sleep he would read a chapter in the Bible and pray. He made and kept the promise. He afterwards spent forty-five years as a missionary among the nations of South Africa, and to his habit of prayer has been attributed his great success in winning these people for Christ.

The early Christians spent much time in prayer; they always prayed before every great undertaking. To the Church at Antioch had come a belief that it was their duty to send out missionaries from among their number, and as they prayed over the matter they learned that this was in truth God's will.

For Older Pupils. The first time that the Bishop of Selkirk visited Kittygazyooit on the Arctic coast an aged Eskimo came to him and asked why he had not come sooner with his message. "Did you know this good news long?" he questioned, and the Bishop answered, "Yes, I have known it from boyhood." "And did your fathers before you know it?" "Yes, they knew it." "Then why was it that you did not come sooner? I thought that it was, perhaps, only a few winters since you knew; and you knew all the time! Why was the good news not brought to us sooner?" "What could I do," said the Bishop in reporting this conversation, "but bow my head in shame and pray that God might use us, as a Christian people, more and more to extend His work."

It is sixteen years since Paul first accepted the good news. The years have been spent in preparing himself for his work and in preaching and teaching in Judea and Syria. The time is now ripe for him to carry the good news abroad.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Set Apart for Service

God has His Plan for Everyone. The Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them, we read, and it is easy to believe that God set apart these great disciples for their great work.

In the Swiss mountains there is a home for friendless children, over whose doorway these words are inscribed, "God has His Plan for Everyone." Is not this a beautiful thought, and an especially appropriate thought for such a place? No one so neglected, so worthless, so low, but God has a plan for him, and it rests with him to achieve it. He has his part in the world's great work to do, and he has his place in his Father's House to fill. His task is always to make the very best possible out of the powers God has given him, and in the place and circumstances God has placed him. Why should any one ever lack courage or a noble self-confidence when he things that he is working out God's plan for him?

God's Call. Every day brings its message to us from God. Some days call us to energy and work. Some days call us to be patient and brave. Some days

bring us a call to brotherhood, sympathy, and self-denial. We can not choose the day's message. It is not always what suits our desires. But only by accepting it will we reach the fullness of life and experience that God means us to have. *J. R. Miller* in *The Presbyterian.*

My Task.

I am glad to think
I am not bound to make the world go right,
But only to discover and to do,
With cheerful heart the work that God appoints,
I will trust in Him,
That He can hold His own; and I will take
His will, above the work He sendeth me
To be my chiefest good. *Jean Ingelow.*

Set Apart as Business Men. The duty of the follower of Jesus in his relation to the industrial world is to give himself with confidence and joy to his business affairs as to that opportunity for the Christian life which lies nearest to his hands. Here is the test which any man may apply to his own business life, Am I, in my own place and degree, moved by the spirit of service? Am I contributing to that general movement of industry which lifts and ameliorates the life of my time; or am I, on the other hand, either a social parasite or a social highwayman? Am I so producing, distributing, administering, as to be a laborer together with God; or am I thwarting the generosity of nature and fattening on the misfortunes of the weak? These are hard questions for many men, corrupted by the passion of commercialism, or by the opportunity for gain; but they are questions which for the vast majority of plodding business lives lead to the restoration of self-respect and hope. Great numbers of such persons are sorely distressed and perplexed by the inconsistency which appears to exist between devotion to their business and loyalty to their Christ. They want to be followers of Jesus, but they have to struggle for a living in the world of industry, and their religion and business, their worship and work, seem hopelessly set apart. This is the spiritual struggle which in earlier ages drove thousands of conscientious souls into the monastic life. They could not find the way to be at once about their own business and about their Father's business. What is it that can restore the sense of unity to such divided lives? It is the spirit of service. To be able to look up out of the dust and uncleanness of the business world and honestly say: "I am here as one that serveth; I am not being ministered unto, but I am ministering; I accept my business responsibilities and my business limitations as indicating the place in this world where I am wanted, and the work in this world which I am called to do." *F. G. Peabody,* in *Jesus Christ and the Social Question.*

II Missionary Topic The Forward Movement

The Beginning of the Movement. The greatest missionary book in the world is the Bible; the greatest missionary book in the Bible is the Acts of the Apostles; the greatest missionary chapter in the Acts is the 13th; the greatest missionary verses in the 13th chapter are the first three verses. It is a great moment in the life of Paul. Knowing his after history, we perceive that it is a moment that affects his whole subsequent life. It is a moment of new and wide beginnings. It is a moment that bears fruit up to this hour. *Edgar W. Work,* in *Great Moments in the Life of Paul.*

Delaying the Carrying out of the Command. Our belief that we are commissioned to give the gospel to the whole world is not yet a dominant motive in our life. We have believed it enough to give a little money, and send a few men and women to foreign lands. But we have not yet comprehended that the Church is primarily a missionary agency, and that we have been delaying instead of completing the charge of our Church's Lord for nineteen hundred years. What the Church is for is not chiefly to be a safe and comfortable nursery for believers in Jesus. It is to be a mighty army for the conquest of the world. Its richly provided home in lands already Christianized is to be the base of supply for an active and ceaseless campaign, in which the banner of the cross is to be carried everywhere over the wide world. The wealth with

which the Church is endowed is not its own, but put into its stewardship, to be used for the Lord who bestowed it. *The Presbyterian.*

A Personal Application of the Command. We associate the command with China and India and Africa, but we should also bring it right down to a personal application within the sphere of our daily life and influence: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Does "go" mean "stay"? Does "ye" include the Christians of our day? Does "preach the gospel to every creature" mean to spend one year, four years, perchance more, in the same home, in the same social circle, belonging to the same organization, in the same college, or in any other place where we are exercising our influence, and to speak of all other subjects of importance but to leave out of the conversation the supreme subject, the claims of Christ upon the individual? We do not so interpret this command of Jesus Christ. To some it will mean that down in the troubled heart of our great cities they will be bringing the messages of the peace and power of Christ. But to all clearly in the intent of Christ His command means that we shall be weaving into our conversation naturally day by day in the sphere of our calling His surpassing excellencies and claims. *John R. Mott,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

How Children Helped. A fourteen-year-old lad was working in an iron mine in Nova Scotia when an explosion of blasting powder occurred. He was picked up torn and bleeding, his eyesight gone, and his legs broken. One day his pastor read him a letter which he had received from a missionary telling how much a missionary vessel was needed to ply between Sydney, Australia, and the lonely mission fields on the South Sea Islands. "Why don't they build it?" asked the poor sufferer. "There is no money," was the answer. The next time the pastor came to see him, the lad was eager to tell about a plan he had thought of to raise money for the ship. "There are twenty thousand Sunday-school children in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward Island," he said, "and if every scholar had a collection card, enough money could be raised to build it." The plan was referred to the Board of Missions and approved, and at the end of a year sums ranging from five cents to one or two dollars had been sent in sufficient number to pay for the "Dayspring," the first one of the many "missionary ships" in the southern seas. You will be glad to know that a wonderful operation restored the sight of this boy, and when the boat was launched he was able to join in the singing and cheering of the thousands of children who watched it glide into the sea.

III Missionary Topic Missionary Motives

Loyalty to Christ. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. In this command of the Risen Christ to His disciples is "the divine charter of the Christian Church." They are the marching orders. When the Duke of Wellington was asked by a chaplain whether he thought it worth while to preach the gospel to the Hindus, he replied with the question, "What are your marching orders?" "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" was the only reply possible. "Then follow your orders" said Wellington, "your only duty is to obey."

During the days between His resurrection and ascension the thoughts of Jesus seem to have centered about the extension of His kingdom. No one who carefully reads all the accounts can doubt His belief in the necessity of foreign missions. Love for Jesus as the Christ and loyalty to His commands must ever be the main motive for missionary efforts. "The love of Christ constraineth us" to carry on His work.

Compassion. Christians who live in civilized lands can not fail to be moved with compassion for heathen people, when once they really know about the wretchedness that everywhere exists in heathen lands, and when they realize, too, that only through Christianity can these people be lifted out of their degradation and sin. He were selfish indeed who would withhold from them the gospel. Of what Christianity can do for heathen we have an example in one of our own possessions, the Hawaiian Islands. There in 1779 Captain Cook was suddenly attacked and killed with spears and stones by the native people; his body was then torn to pieces, and the flesh burned and the bones preserved

in the idol temple. Eighty years ago the people were still in heathen darkness and brought human offerings to their idols. In 1820 American missionaries began their work among these people. To-day there are Christian churches and schools throughout the islands, and this territory of our own is a Christian land.

Paying back a Debt. Our own ancestors were once not much better than the heathen for whom our missionaries are now working. Cæsar has described them, and has told how the women helped the men in battle. Our genealogical tree has been traced far back for us by a Brahmin. The high-caste Brahmins, you know, form the highest class of Hindu society, and regard themselves as superior to all other men. One of them, Narayan Sheshadri, in 1843 embraced the Christian faith and became a missionary among his own people. He visited this country, and at a church in West Philadelphia was introduced to the audience as an evidence that must satisfy every one of the value of Christian missions. In the *Sunday-School Times* Dr. H. Clay Trumbull recalled the meeting and said: "Narayan Sheshadri, in his imposing presence and dress, stepped forward, and, perhaps touched in his pride as a lordly Brahmin by the reference to his rescue and uplifting, said, as he looked down into the light faces upturned to his:

'My friends, if I had ever had any doubt as to the value of Christian missions that doubt would be removed as I stand here and look into your bright and intelligent faces, and consider the facts in the case. When my ancestors were among the lordliest persons on earth, considering themselves, and being considered by others, as one with the gods, worthy of divine honors, your ancestors were among the most degraded of human beings, looked down on and despised by those of my race. Yet by Christian missionaries your fathers were sought out and won to Christ, and in consequence you now sit here, clothed and in your right mind, as a living proof of the value of Christian missions, concerning the interests of which we are to consult together this afternoon.'

That was a truth we do not always consider as we should. I recalled that when the Prince of Wales, now King Edward VII, visited India with Dean Stanley, it was said that the India officials sent into the jungle and lassoed a few specimens of the ancient race from which the English people are supposed to have sprung, and brought them in for the young Prince of Wales to look at. And it is owing to Christian missions and Christian missionaries that we are, under God, now above the level, or the low depths, of our ancestors. All the civilization and the refinement, and the Christianity, that we enjoy in America, and on which we, in a sense, pride ourselves, we, as a people,—with the exception of the Hebrew race—owe to this glorious agency. Since I heard that telling rejoinder by the Christian Brahmin, I am more ready than before to consider not only what is my duty to the cause of Christian missions, but what gratitude I should have to Christian missions in view of what they have done for me and mine."

SENTENCE SERMONS

If a man has any religion he must either give it away or give it up. *Archbishop Whately.*

I would not have you, if God meant you to be a missionary, drivel down into a king. *Spurgeon.*

One can no more prevent Christian influences and Christian efforts from flying eastward than one can keep carrier pigeons from their homing; for Christianity came out of the East and to the East it must return. *Charles Cuthbert Hall.*

To take up our situation and our work as given us of God is to make both great: to no one is given a greater task than simply to do the will of God. *Henry Churchill King.*

The missionary movement to-day is not sufficiently widespread to make the knowledge of Jesus Christ readily accessible to every human being because the life of the home church is not what it should be. *John R. Mott.*

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into the harvest. Matt. 9.38.

God does not want you in China if you can not witness in London: He has no use in India for one who is dumb in his own house. *G. Campbell Morgan.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

For John Mark it was excellent training to be the attendant of such missionaries as Paul and Barnabas, engaged in such service for God. In what work are you an attendant?

He who faithfully prays at home, a missionary tells us, is working for foreign missions as well as the man in the field, for the nearest way to the heart of Hindu or Chinaman is by way of the throne of God.

If we may not be among the heroes, says Bishop Phillips Brooks, let us, like the Church of old, hear the Holy Spirit and go with Paul and Barnabas down to the ship and send them away with all our sympathy and blessing.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

With this lesson we begin the real story of the Book of Acts, the record of Paul's missionary labors. Five prophets and teachers in the Church at Antioch, Barnabas and Symeon and Lucius and Manaen and Saul, had been praying and asking divine guidance in regard to the special work for which Barnabas and Saul felt themselves called. They were assured that it was God's will that the two should be sent away to other lands. After fasting and praying and laying on of hands, they sent the two on their mission. Going to Seleucia, the port of Antioch, they set sail for the island of Cyprus, accompanied by a young man named John Mark. They landed at Salamis and crossed the island to Paphos on the western coast, preaching in the synagogues on the way.

The proconsul at Paphos, Sergius Paulus, like many Romans, believed in a sorcerer, but being withal a sensible man he called Barnabas and Saul to the court that he might hear from them. Fearing that he would lose his control over the proconsul, the sorcerer, whose name was Bar-Jesus in Hebrew, Elymas in Arabic, sought to prejudice his mind against them. Then Saul looked severely on the sorcerer and indignantly exclaimed that he was no son of a Saviour, but son of a devil, no prophet of God, but an enemy of all righteousness, full of guile and villiany, and God's judgment would render him blind for a time. At once his eyes were darkened and he groped around for some one to lead him by the hand. Seeing this miracle the proconsul believed in the work of the Lord. Thus Saul assumed his place as the accredited messenger of the Lord, and the apostle to the Gentiles is known henceforth by the Romanized form of his name, Paul.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE DISCUSSION

1. The motives of modern missionary work. See article by H. Rashdall in *American Journal of Theology,* July, 1907.

2. St. Paul's philosophy of history. See article with this title by Professor Ramsay in the *Contemporary Magazine* for Sept., 1907, and "Religion still the Key of History," by S. E. Baldwin in the *American Historical Review,* Jan., 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. To what disagreement later between Paul and Barnabas did John Mark's departure at Perga lead? (Acts 15.36-39.) 2. What scene in Christ's life is recalled by Paul's reception in the synagogue? (Luke 4.16-30.) 3. Read Paul's address, verses 17-41, and compare with it that of Peter's in chapter II and that of Stephen's in chapter VII. 4. Give an analysis of Paul's address. 5. On what two occasions did Jesus tell the apostles to preach first to the Jews? (Matt. 10.6; Luke 24.47.) 6. Under what circumstances did Paul and his company leave Antioch? (Verses 50-52.) 7. What was the significance of their action recorded in verse 51, and when had Jesus commanded this? (Matt. 10. 14; Luke 9.5.) 8. Read Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, believed by many scholars to have been written to these first Gentile converts in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. 9. How did Jesus say each one decides his own fate as recorded in John 12.47, 48?

LESSON VI—MAY 9

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY—ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

Read Acts 13.13-52. Commit verses 38, 39.

Golden Text

The word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. Acts 13.49.

LESSON TEXT Acts 13.13-16, 38-49

13 Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. 14 But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 16 And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand said,

Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken:...38 Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: 39 and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon *you* which is spoken in the prophets:

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish;
For I work a work in your days,
A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you.

42 And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*,

I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,
That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.

48 And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

13. *Now Paul and his company.* Note that "Barnabas and Saul," verses 2 and 7, have become "Paul and his company."—*John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem.* See verse 5. Whether from fear of the dangers, or disapproval of Paul's methods, or from one of many other reasons that have been suggested, can not be known; we only know that his departure displeased Paul. Barnabas, who was his uncle, readily overlooked the fault. See Acts 15.37-40.

15. *Sent unto them.* Paul and Barnabas were sitting with the congregation.
16. *Men of Israel.* The Hebrews.—*Ye that fear God.* The Jewish proselytes.
17-37. Compare Peter's speech in chapter II and Stephen's in chapter VII.
38. *This man.* There is no noun expressed in the Greek. It refers back to "him whom God raised up," verse 37.—*Is proclaimed unto you remission of sins.* See Luke 24.47.
39. *Justified.* Justified, treated as if righteous and just, pardoned (*Webster*). See Gal. 3.11.
40. *In the prophets.* That part of the Old Testament called by the Jews "the Prophets."
41. The quotation is from the Septuagint version of Hab. 1.5, and there refers to the threatened Babylonian captivity of the Jews as a punishment for their sins.
42. *And as they* (Paul and Barnabas) *went out, they* (the congregation) *besought.*
42. *Now when the synagogue broke up.* When the congregation was dismissed.—*Devout proselytes.* "The epithet merely implies that, whereas they were formerly idolaters, they now were worshippers of God" (*Gloag*).—*Continue in the grace of God.* "Keep yourselves in the love of God." *"Grace* is Paul's favorite word for *justification.* We have already had it in the sense of *favor,* but here it occurs for the first time in the special Pauline sense, corresponding to his words in verses 38-9. He asks them to hold fast the measure of faith they already have, and to expect further divine favor in answer to their stedfastness" (*Rackham*).
45. *Blasphemed.* They spoke slanderous word against the apostles.
46. *It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you.* This was Christ's command, Acts 1.8; 3.26.—*Judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life.* Compare John 3.16-19.—*We turn to the Gentiles.* In every city Paul spoke first to the Jews; he announces here that in this city of Antioch he will turn to the Gentiles, and he sees that everywhere his mission will be chiefly to the latter.
47. The quotation is from Isa. 49.6.
48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life.* Compare verse 46 and John 1.11, 12. "The best rendering would be 'were disposed to eternal life,' which preserves the exact shade of the verb and has just the degree of ambiguity which belongs to the original" (*Bartlet.*). "This verse is a battle-ground. By Calvin and by Calvinistic commentators generally it is regarded as a proof-text of the doctrine of predestination. 'This ordaining can be referred only to the eternal decree of God,' says Calvin. The Armenian commentators understand the word rendered *ordained* as indicating, not the will of God, but the disposition of the believers. So Adam Clarke: 'The verb τάττω or τάσσω signifies to place, set, order, appoint, dispose; hence it has been considered here as implying the disposition or readiness of mind of several persons in the congregation, such as the religious proselytes mentioned, who possessed the reverse of the disposition of those Jews who spake against those things, contradicting and blaspheming.' That the word here rendered *ordained* signifies not merely a disposition of mind in the actor, but a determination or decision affecting him by some one else, and here by God, is, I think, clear from the following considerations: (1) the form of the verb which is the passive participle; they were disposed by some power or influence acting upon them; (2) from the verb itself which signifies not a mere mental disposition or choice, but a determination or decree; (3) from other parallel teachings of the New Testament, which represent faith as the result of divine grace, working in the heart of the believer. But there is certainly nothing in this passage to indicate that the divine disposing of the Gentiles to believe was an eternal or an irresistible decree; nothing more is indicated than an effectual work of grace, accepted by the Gentiles and for that reason effectual" (*Abbott*).

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

13. *John departed from them.* Ewald supposes that the place of Mark was taken by Titus. Titus is not mentioned in the Acts, and yet we know that he accompanied Paul to the Council at Jerusalem (Gal. 2.1). Hence the prob-

ability is that he was with the apostle before Luke, the author of the Acts, joined him. *Paton J. Gloag.*

16. *Paul stood up.* Some rumor that they were preachers of a new and remarkable doctrine must already have spread in the little Jewish community, and it was evidently expected that they would be called upon. Paul instantly accepted the invitation. Usually a Jewish preacher sat down during the delivery of his sermon, as is freely done by Roman Catholics abroad; but Paul, instead of going to the pulpit, seems merely to have risen in his place, and with uplifted arm and beckoning finger he spoke to the expectant throng.

The sermon in most instances, as in the case of our Lord's address at Nazareth, would naturally take the form of a *Midrash* or exposition of what the congregation had just heard in one or other of the two lessons. Such seems to have been the line taken by Paul in this his first recorded sermon. The occurrence of two words in this brief address, of which one is a most unusual form (verse 18, as a nurse-father, Deut. 1.32) and the other is employed in a most unusual meaning (verse 17, exalted), and the fact that these two words are found respectively in the first of Deuteronomy and the first of Isaiah, combined with the circumstance that the historical part of St. Paul's sermon turns on the subject alluded to in the first of these chapters, and the promise of free remission is directly suggested by the other, would make it extremely probable that those were the two chapters which he had just heard read. And when turning to the Jewish Lectionary, and bearing in mind its extreme antiquity, we find that these two very lessons were combined as the *Parashah* (first lesson) and *Haphtarah* (second lesson) of the same sabbath, we see an almost convincing proof that those were the two lessons which had been read on that Sabbath Day in the synagogue of Antioch more than 1800 years ago. *F. W. Farrar,* in *The Life and Work of St. Paul.*

17-37. The Jews were never tired of hearing their own history. Whenever a speaker arose in Jewish society determined to carry a specific point, he came with all the background of Jewish history, and under the influence of recollections heroic and thrilling, he endeavored to carry the immediate point of the occasion. One might have expected that the Jews would have become weary of hearing their history time after time, but historians record it to their credit that they were always ready to hear the living story again. Do not some of us occasionally say, "Tell me the old, old story of Jesus and His love"?—therein we are partly Jewish—that is our story. As the Jews began from the formation of themselves as a people, we begin at Bethlehem, and in proportion as we are in the right spirit and temper, we are never tired of hearing the old, old story; it brings its own dew with it, like every morning in the year. When we are tired of hearing that story the kingdom of heaven amongst men will come to a standstill in its halting progress. *Joseph Parker,* in *The People's Bible.*

39. *Justified from all things.*

> *Forgiveness* does not feel the word to say,
> As I believe in One who takes away
> Our sin, and gives us righteousness instead. *A. H. Clough.*

47. *So hath the Lord commanded us.* In declaring that they are commanded to do so they quote, not an injunction to that effect, but a word of Scripture which asserted that Christ belongs also to the Gentiles. They found their command from Christ on a prediction about Him. This was in every way more forcible than to have said the Spirit sent them forth to the Gentiles. For this might have been denied by their faithless Jewish hearers, who could not so readily fly in the face of a quotation from their own Law. *J. M. Stifler,* in *An Introduction to the Acts.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

14. *They went into the synagogue and sat down.* The synagogue was always a plain, rectangular building erected on the highest spot in the neighborhood, or having a tall pole on the roof to make it conspicuous. Unlike the scribes who desired to have "the chief seats" (Mark 12.38, 39), Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue and sat down with the congregation. The chief seats were around the ark or chest at one end of the building, containing

the sacred rolls. Before the ark hung a veil and lamps. In front was a platform with its reading desk or pulpit. In the congregation the men were separated from the women. During the prayers Paul and Barnabas stood with the rest with their faces toward Jerusalem.

15. *After the reading of the law and the prophets.* When synagogue worship began during the Babylonian captivity the law and certain psalms were the portions read. Dr. Tristram informs us that "During the time when the Jews were oppressed by Antiochus Epiphanes, before their deliverance by the Maccabees, the tyrant (163 B. C.) issued an edict forbidding the public reading of the law. They then substituted the prophets in its stead. After the recovery of their liberties, they still continued the reading of the prophets after the law. In the synagogues of the Samaritans the reading of the prophets has never been introduced." Seven portions of the law and three of the prophets were read. The Pentateuch was called "the Law"; "The Prophets" included the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets; the rest of the Old Testament writings were termed *Hagiographa.*

15. *The rulers of the synagogue sent unto them.* There was a "ruler" and an "attendant," but in no synagogue were there officials whose duty it was to read or speak. The ruler called whom he would to the platform for these services. The scribes, who were the copyists of the scriptures and the lawyers of the Jews, and the rabbis, the learned doctors of the law, were the ones who usually expounded the scriptures, though an Israelite of ability could perform this service. Paul was a Jewish rabbi, and probably wore some insignia that distinguished him as such. Compare the service in the synagogue at Nazareth, when Christ was called on to speak, Luke 4.16-30. The ruler directed the attendant to request either Paul or Barnabas to speak to the people.

50. *The devout women of honorable estate.* The honors and influence which belonged to women in the cities of Asia Minor form one of the most remarkable features in the history of the country. In all periods the evidence runs on the same lines. On the border between fable and history we find the Amazons. The best authenticated cases of *mutterrecht* belong to Asia Minor. Under the Roman Empire we find women magistrates, presidents at games, and loaded with honors. The custom of the country influenced even the Jews, who in at least one case appointed a woman at Smyrna to the position of *Archi-synagogos* (ruler of the synagogue). It would be strange if the women had not exercised some influence over St. Paul's fortunes. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Church in the Roman Empire.*

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Last week we left Paul at Paphos, on the west coast of the island of Cyprus. The next recorded event is the sailing of Paul and his company from there northwestward to Perga in Pamphylia, the province which extended along the central part of the southern coast of Asia Minor. (The term Asia Minor was not known in Paul's day; there was no name which included all the Roman provinces that made up this peninsula.) Perga was several miles from the coast on the river Cestrus, which was then navigable. Paul and his company did not tarry long in Perga. He went due northward a hundred miles and more, crossing the Taurus Mountains to Antioch on the high, central tableland. It was formerly believed that he found Perga deserted, the people having gone to the hills for the hot summer months. Professor Ramsay, however, declares that this nomadic practice was introduced by the Turks and was unknown in Paul's day. His theory is that Paul suffered at Perga an attack of malarial fever and was obliged to seek higher levels.

Antioch is called here Antioch of Pisidia to distinguish it from Antioch of Syria. Notice the seven provinces into which Asia Minor was divided: Asia, Bithynia, and Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Lycia, Pamphylia, and Cilicia. These were the Roman divisions, into which the peninsula was divided for administrative purposes. The popular names of the various districts were different, and it is these names which are sometimes given in the Acts. Pisidia and Phrygia were districts of the provinces. Antioch was really a city of Phrygia, which, however, bordered Pisidia and might, therefore, be called "of" or "towards" Pisidia. Augustus settled Roman soldiers there and made it a Roman colony.

ROMAN DIVISIONS OF ASIA MINOR

For the controversy as to whether Antioch was one of the cities to which Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians, see the Geographical Background of the next lesson.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Two weeks ago we had a lesson about "the Gospel in Antioch." Where was this city? What led the disciples to go there? To whom did they preach? Why was Barnabas sent to them? Whom did he get to help him in the work? What name was given to the disciples here? What did they do for the disciples in Jerusalem?

To-day we have a lesson about events in another Antioch. Point it out on the map. Where had Paul been since his work in Antioch of Syria? Where did he go from Paphos? Point out Perga on the map. What mountains are between Perga and Antioch? It was a dangerous journey through narrow passes over these mountains. What city is about a hundred miles from here? How long does it take to go there by rail? It probably took Paul five days if nothing delayed him, to climb this same distance up over the Taurus Mountains to Antioch. In a letter which he afterwards wrote to the Corinthians he spoke of having been "in journeys often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers." These dangers were just the ones which he would meet on this journey from Perga to Antioch. The rivers here rush down through narrow ravines, and after a storm the danger from a sudden flood is very great. Then in the passes there were "castles of robbers, who watched for passing travelers to pounce upon, and were hidden in positions so inaccessible that even the Roman armies had not been able to exterminate them."

For Older Pupils. In the Scientific Institute of New York there is a remarkable diamond. For one hundred days this diamond had been under the revolutions of a grinding wheel which revolved so rapidly that it had traversed in that time a distance equal to three times the distance around the globe, working under a weight of forty pounds instead of the usual two pounds, and yet no impression was made upon it. The lapidary was exhausted, but the diamond was uncut, still in the rough, and the jeweler sent it to the Institute as a curiosity.

Like this refractory diamond were the Jews of Christ's day and Paul's. One who reads the Gospels and the Book of the Acts continuously, paying heed to the pressure that was brought to bear on the Jews to accept Jesus as the Christ, and seeing them reject Him again and again, must feel that the task

was a hopeless one. This belief came to Paul at Antioch in Pisidia. Here he made his resolve that henceforth, though he would still offer the gospel to the Jews first in whatever city he went, his main effort should be for the Gentiles, the diamonds in the rough that would not resist the shaping hand of God.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Self-Sentenced

A Savor of Life unto Life or of Death unto Death. Paul told the Jews at Antioch that they had condemned themselves. It was not his fault; it was not God's fault. The word of God had been spoken to them, but they would not accept it. They thrust it from them, and in so doing passed sentence on themselves, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life. "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life," said Jesus once to the Jews of Capernaum; this is what the Jews of Antioch did. "And these are they which bear witness of me"; he continued. This the Jews of Antioch would not believe. "And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life," sorrowfully added the Giver of eternal life; this was the sin of the Jews of Antioch, the sin by which they judged themselves unworthy of that life, judicially decided themselves unworthy, these men who thought that they alone of all the nations were worthy.

It was the same word of God that was preached to the Gentiles, and they accepted it gladly; by their faith they judged themselves worthy of eternal life. The two expressions, "unworthy of eternal life" and "ordained to eternal life," as Dr. Maclaren points out, are negative and positive sides of the same thought. "The testimony of the apostles was 'a savor of life unto life or of death unto death'" comments St. Augustine. "The same fire reddens the gold and burns the dross: under the same threshing-sledge the grain is cleaned and the chaff is crushed out; by the same press-beam the oil is separated from the dregs."

A Lesson from the Gospel of John. Let us recall a lesson which we had last year about "Jesus the Saviour of the World." Nicodemus, you remember, had come to Jesus at night for a confidential talk, wishing to learn more about his place in the kingdom of God. Jesus told him that the members of that spiritual kingdom are not the Jews merely because they are Jews, but they are all those who have been "born again," who have received a new spiritual nature through the agency of the Spirit of God Himself. God is the Revealer of divine things. Then Jesus said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." What is the remainder of this verse? And the next verse, "For God so loved the world"? And then Jesus continued His thought: "For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him. He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not is judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil."

The Choice must be made. To each and to all God says, "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death," and it is for every man to choose between these two. God has fore-ordained the freedom of every man's will. Apart from all the influences of ancestry and surroundings, or as it is said in modern phrasing, "heredity" and "environment," the real self of the man has to choose whether he will go up or go down. God is constantly inviting every man to choose the good and to refuse the evil. God also holds men back when they would rush to their destruction, while He is thus inviting and urging them to be saved. "Why will ye die?" is His constant call to those going astray. Yet at the last as at the first, God permits a man to make his persistent and final choice of his destiny. If a man is lost, it is because he chooses to be lost. *The Sunday-School Times.*

The Passing of the Opportunity. Picture to yourself what would happen to the bird if it missed the appointed hour of its migration. Yonder soars the winged army, and the air is ful of imperious call and summons. It wheels and lingers in the sunset, but this one foolish creature still hangs back. Then at last

the great host begins to move southwards, and silence falls upon empty fields. The sun shines next day, but with diminished beam, and this foolish creature is not afraid. And then some night the autumn storm bursts upon the reaped fields, and after that comes the frost, and then the deep snow, and the shepherd on the hills finds in the snow a little dead bird, starved and frozen, it has missed the hour of its migration.

Can we doubt that that is also a picture of things in human life? Can we hide from ourselves the truth that in the same way men do miss the seasons of God's grace? Is it not possible to resist the Spirit, to repulse the heavenly Prompter, to dismiss the warning impulse?

I can not imagine any man, translated into the realm of the eternities, whose very conception implies limitlessness, quite coming to his last chance; nor can you pierce the hereafter to know where that last chance is set, even if there be such an awful hour of finality. But this I know, that here, and within the limits of this world, we do see men miss their last chances. We do see them refuse the grace of God, and count themselves unworthy of eternal life.

Don't wait, don't doubt, don't linger. Observe the season, and settle things with God now. And I plead with you to do this lest for you the hour should come (which God forbid) when you will wake from your dream of folly to utter this bitterest of all cries: "Behold, the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved." *W. I. Dawson,* in *The Evangelistic Note.*

II Urging on Others

The Hostile Jews. The hostile Jews were persistent in their efforts to persecute Paul and Barnabas and overthrow their work. They urged on the opposition of the women who occupied a high social position in Antioch, and with the help of the chief men of the city they succeeded in driving away the apostles. Not content with this, they followed them to Lystra, and they "persuaded the multitudes" so successfully that they stoned Paul (Acts 14.19). In Iconium "the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles and made them evil affected against the brethren" (Acts 14.2), and joined with those from Antioch in "stirring up" the people of Lystra. In Philippi, Paul was untroubled by hostile Jews, and this may have had something to do with the especial note of joy that runs through the epistle to the Philippians, but when he reached Berœa we hear again of Jews, this time from Thessalonica, who "came thither, stirring up and troubling the multitudes" (Acts 17.13). Many of the Gentiles believed, but—the Jews came from some other city and stirred up the people: this is the report in city after city.

There have always been men like these Jews in every age and every land who have delighted in "stirring up" others. There is no community free from such tormentors. It is but recently that citizens of the United States tried to stir up trouble between our country and Japan, for which there was no warrant, and if war could have been brought about they would have rejoiced.

Lincoln's Advice. With a people as litigious as the early Illinois settlers, it was a simple matter to stir up strife, and make work for the lawyers; and Lincoln, instead of egging clients into courts, set his face against such practices. "Discourage litigation," was his advice to lawyers. "Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how the nominal winner is often the real loser, in fees, expenses, and waste of time. There will always be enough business. Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this." *F. T. Hill,* in *Lincoln the Lawyer.*

Urged on by Public Opinion. A man who hears the results of public investigations is apt to exclaim against the depravity of the men who manage our business or our politics. This is a very superficial way of looking at the matter. If here and there some individual misuses his money or his office, we are justified in putting the blame upon him individually. But if a large number of people are misusing their money or their offices, the fault can not be theirs alone. The community is a partaker in that fault. The chief trouble lies in the public standard of morals. A great majority of the industrial and political leaders who have done the most harm are very excellent men according to their lights. Most of them would scorn to tell a lie except in the way of business, as the old proverb runs. If an investigation shows them the real character of

the things they have been doing, they die of broken hearts—not, as people commonly think, because they are afraid of going to jail, but because they are honestly ashamed and repentant. The blame for misuse of industrial or political power is ours just as much as theirs. For it is the standards that are at fault, and we as well as they have a share in making the standards.

"What!" you will say, "are we, who never owned a share of railway stock in our lives, to blame for railway rebates? Are we, who pay the prices charged by monopoly, to blame for the abuse of the power of industrial combination?" Yes. The man who in his own grocery store encourages his clerk to let the scales weigh a little too heavy for the customer who does not notice or is too self-respecting to make a fuss about it, has deprived himself of the chance of saying anything effective against railway rebates. The man who has tried to create an artificial demand for labor by slow work or unfinished work, or any other of the devices known to the trade, has become a partaker in the responsibility for all the worst evils for which he has upbraided the great monopolists. Any condemnation of trusts on his part is a mere matter of words. He is abusing them for doing on a large scale what he has been trying to do on a small scale.

Whatever the intelligent and influential world regards as success, influential men will try to achieve. Whatever means the intelligent and influential world condones in its work, the ambitious man will practice in his. *Arthur T. Hadley,* in *Standards of Public Morals.*

III Missionary Topic Receiving the Gospel with Joy

Starting Early. Lo, we turn to the Gentiles, said Paul, and when the Gentiles heard this they were glad and glorified the word of God. And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. They were eager for the good news when first it was brought to them, and even after they were left as sheep without a shepherd they were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Similar has been the result of preaching to heathen nations, for among them, as the author of "the Cruise of the Cachalot" says, the Bible "starts fairly." By them the Bible is read on its merits, he continues, "and these merits are so great that they work miracles among an unsophisticated people. I have often been delighted to find the natives of the Vavare Group in the Friendly Islands sitting around one of their number who was reading the Bible aloud, all with eyes fixed on the reader and with almost breathless attention hanging on his words."

How the Good News was received in Uganda. Janet Livingstone, the sister of David Livingstone, made me a present of a richly bound Bible. Not liking to risk it on the voyage round the Victoria Nyanza, I asked Frank Pocock, my companion, to lend me his somewhat worn and stained copy; and I sailed on my way to Uganda, little thinking what a revolution in Central Africa that book would make. We stayed in Uganda some time, and one day during a morning levee, the subject of religion was broached, and I happened to strike an emotional chord in the King's heart by making a casual reference to angels. King and chiefs were moved as one man to hear more about angels. My verbal descriptions of them were not sufficient. "But," said I, "I have a book with me which will tell you far better, not only what angels are, but what God and His blessed Son are like, to whom the angels are but ministering servants."

"Fetch it," they cried eagerly. "Fetch it now; we will wait." The book was brought, opened, and I read the 10th chapter of Ezekiel, and the 7th chapter of Revelations from the 9th verse to the end; and as I read the 11th and 12th verses you could have heard a pin drop, and, when they heard the concluding verses, "'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat,'" I had a presentiment that Uganda would eventually be won for Christ. I was not permitted to carry that Bible away. Mtesa never forgot the wonderful words, nor the striking effect they had on him and on his chiefs. As I was turning away from his country, his messenger came, and cried: "'The book! Mtesa wants the book!'" It was given to him. To-day the Christians number many thousands in Uganda. They have

proved their faith at the stake, under the knobstick, and under torture, till death. *Henry M. Stanley.*

A Valued Treasure. Mr. Egerton R. Young lived a long time among the Indians of Northwestern British America, and has given us interesting glimpses into their lives. Once, he tells us, a party of these red men, who had become Christians and had learned to read their Indian translation of the Bible, made a long trip to Lake Superior to fish. They took as little with them as possible, but they did not fail to put into their packs their Bibles. On the evening before their return home after the season of fishing was over, one Indian had read aloud from his Bible, and his son had then carefully stowed it away in his pack. While he was sleeping, another Indian living there came in and asked to borrow the book, but failed to return it that night. Early the next morning the father and son put on their snow shoes and started on their long journey. On reaching their home and opening the pack, the loss of the Bible was discovered. The next morning the father was missing. He had started back to the Great Lakes. With a speed that only a native skilled in the use of snow-shoe travel could make, he traversed the whole distance and recovered his Book. To him it was worth at least a journey of two hundred and eighty miles.

SENTENCE SERMONS

We are daily judging ourselves unworthy of divine grace in every act of refusal to accept and rely on it. *Lyman Abbott.*

He came unto his own and his own received him not; these words are an assertion of the awful ultimateness of the power of free will in man. *Phillips Brooks.*

Life's business being just the terrible choice. *Robert Browning.*

When Christ as the Life has entered the heart, He must and will as the Light shine out into the surrounding darkness. *Andrew Murray.*

> I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
> Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it. *Browning.*

The most awful and the most splendid fact in human life to me is this, that God puts the reins of my destiny in my own hands, and neither holds the reins before nor behind me. *Lyman Abbott.*

God took the Jewish candle out of the candle-stick because it would not be the light of the world, and the nation went into darkness: it was for the same reason that the Church went into the dark ages—it turned its candle into a dark lantern, and said, "As long as I may see the light I do not care who is in the dark." *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

It (the Gospel) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Rom. 1.16.

Ye will not come to me that ye may have life. John 5.40.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

"Every man imputes himself," says Tennyson. It is a startling thought that by our attitude toward Jesus the Christ we reveal our worthiness or unworthiness of eternal life.

After a battle with Pompey in which so many thousands lost their lives, Cæsar stood on the battlefield and sadly exclaimed, "Alas! he would have it so." If ours is the way of death instead of the way of life, it is because we would have it so.

The Jews were jealous of Paul's success. They counted him a rival. It must have been a stormy scene when their hatred broke forth in contradictions and blaspheming. Jealousy unchecked has many other bitter evils in its train. In the words of Doctor Horace Bushnell, If you have a jealous temper, get the mastery of that, and all the bitter passions will skulk and disappear, anticipating their doom.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Paul and his company sailed from Paphos, the city in Cyprus where Sergius

Paulus was proconsul, to Perga in Pamphilia. From here John Mark, his "attendant" returned to Jerusalem, and the others journeyed northward to Pisidian Antioch. There were many Jews in Antioch, and on the Sabbath Paul and Barnabas went to their synagogue, taking seats among the people. After the reading of the law and of the prophets, the ruler of the synagogue sent a request to them to address the congregation. Paul accepted the invitation. Beckoning with his hand, the signal for attention, he gave them an address whose theme has been well called "God's greatest gift to us." He recalled the glories of Israel's past from Moses to David, recounting the goodness of God to them and especially His promise of a Saviour; he told them that Jesus who was announced by John as the Saviour, had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures by His death and resurrection; and then he urged them to accept Him, for in no other way could they be saved. He closed with a prophecy of Habakkuk, bidding them beware lest in rejecting this salvation they call down upon themselves as severe a judgment as that inflicted by the Chaldean armies on the Jewish nation when it refused to heed Habakkuk's warning.

So impressed were the people that they asked the evangelists as they were leaving, to give them another address on the following Sabbath. Many Jews and proselytes followed them to their abiding place and sought further instruction. The report of the new doctrine spread during the week, and when the Sabbath came a great crowd had assembled in the synagogue. Some of the Jews were infuriated at the sight of the multitude; they had won only a few proselytes, and now "the whole city" was eager to listen to this stranger! Jealousy, and anger, no doubt, at Paul's free offering of salvation to the Gentiles, filled their hearts, and they began to contradict everything that Paul said, and to revile him. Their rage convinced Paul and Barnabas that henceforth their chief work must be among the Gentiles, and this fact they boldly proclaimed. The gospel had been spoken first to the Jews, but by rejecting it they had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles," solemnly said Paul, and quoted a Messianic prophecy from Isaiah, thereby implying that Jesus is the "light" set for the salvation of the Gentiles, and that they were carrying out His work in bearing their message to the uttermost part of the earth.

By their choice the Jews had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, and by their choice the Gentiles had judged themselves worthy. The Gentiles rejoiced and glorified God and the word spread throughout that region. After a time persecution came to the evangelists. The hostile Jews stirred up the influential women, the latter stirred up the chief men, and together they brought about the banishment of Paul and Barnabas. Shaking the dust off from their feet to show their intention of having nothing more to do with their enemies, the apostles went on to Iconium. The disciples of Antioch proved their genuineness in this time of trial; they were filled with joy, for they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. Verses 38 and 39 and the first three chapters of Romans.
2. The nature of Messianic prophecy.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Review lessons 4 and 8 of the first quarter. 2. Read the entire 14th chapter of Acts. 3. From 2 Cor. 10.1 and 10, what reason can be inferred why the people of Lystra did not call Paul Jupiter, their supreme god? 4. What was the motive of the Jews who turned the people of Lystra against Paul? (Acts 13.45.) 5. What native of Lystra afterwards became a co-worker and close friend of Paul's? (Acts 16.1.) 6. What does Paul say about his experience at Lystra in 2 Cor. 11.25 and 2 Tim. 3.11? 7. What reasons for tribulations are given in Rom. 5.3-5 and Heb. 12.11? 8. In his report to the church at Antioch, what did Paul say was the great result of their first missionary journey? 9. Give a full report of the first missionary journey from and to Antioch in Syria.

LESSON VII—MAY 16

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY—ICONIUM AND LYSTRA

Read Acts 14.1-28. Commit verses 21, 22.

Golden Text

For all the gods of the peoples are idols:
But Jehovah made the heavens. Psalm 96.5.

LESSON TEXT Acts 14.8-22.

8 And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. 9 The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, 10 said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. 11 And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. 13 And the priest of Jupiter whose *temple* was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. 14 But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out 15 and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: 16 who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

19 But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, 22 confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *And at Lystra there sat a certain man.* Perhaps, like the cripple of Acts 3.2, he sat begging in his usual place on the streets.

11. *In the speech of Lycaonia.* Probably a Greek dialect, "perhaps bearing as little resemblance to Greek as Gaelic or Welsh does to English." Paul had spoken in Greek. His not understanding the Lycaonian dialect, verse 14, explains why he did not interfere earlier.

13. *Unto the gates.* It has been questioned whether these gates were the gates of the temple of Jupiter, of the city, or of the house where Paul was staying. Against the last supposition is the fact that the Greek word πυλῶνας is in the plural and, as Mr. Rackham says, the apostles would hardly have been lodging in a house of more than one *pylon*, nor could a sacrifice be easily offered in the narrow streets of an eastern city. "It will simplify matters very much," he says, "if we suppose that the lame man had been at the gate of the temple of Jupiter, and that the crowds were assembled there on the occasion of some

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA

great religious festival. The priest would then have been on the spot, and the bulls and garlands all ready. Instead of sacrificing within the area as usual, the priest brought them to the gates, the scene of the miracle, where the crowds were still collected."

15. *These vain things.* "Their Jupiter and Mercury, with all their paraphernalia of temples and sacrifices, were *vanities, i. e.* no-gods, no-things; they had no real existence" (*Rackham*). See 1 Cor. 8.4; Gen. 1.1; Psa. 146.6.

16. *All the nations.* R. V. M., *Gentiles.* See Acts 17.30; Rom. 2.14, 15.

19. See II Cor. 11.25; II Tim. 3.11. "To-day, Hosanna; to-morrow, Crucify Him: to-day, sacrificed to; to-morrow, sacrificed" (*Matthew Henry*).

22. *Confirming.* Literally, *making them stand firm upon, establishing, strengthening.*

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

10. *Said with a loud voice.* After this clause in several versions, either in the text or margin, the following is found: I say unto thee, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, stand upright on thy feet. Though this reading may not be entitled to a place in the text, yet it is not likely that St. Paul would not have used the sacred name on such an occasion; especially as this appears to have been the usual form. *Adam Clarke, Commentary.*

11. *The gods are come down to us.* The most significant feature in the history of an epoch is the manner it has of welcoming a great man. Whether they shall take him to be a god, to be a prophet, or what they shall take him to be: by their way of answering that, we shall see, as though through a little window, into the very heart of these men's spirtual condition. *Carlyle.*

15-17. Two things, at least, may be noticed in St. Paul's address at Lystra. There was nothing in it distinctively Christian: it might have been spoken by a pious Jew; and yet the very absence of Christian phraseology witnesses to the truthful report of the speech, as also to the tact of St. Paul. This "natural religion" of the address at Lystra and its appeal to the material benefits of life would be likely to influence men who were dependent on rain and fruitful seasons. Or it may be that the apostle's purpose was merely to check an act of idolatry on the part of the inhabitants, rather than to preach a Gospel; or the speech may have been interrupted before the Christian application was enforced. But in any case it is difficult to believe that any one who was concocting a speech for the apostle would have made it void of any Christian reference whatever. At the same time, the whole narrative shows us in the plainest manner that St. Paul, in his preaching to the inhabitants of Lystra, proclaimed something far higher than a creed of natural theology. *R. J. Knowling,* in *The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ.*

19. *There came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium.* If we may judge from modern experience, these Jews were traders of the class of brokers or middle-men, who were speculating in the approaching harvest, and came to look after their business. Greeks and Armenians play among the primitive natives at the present day exactly the part which I attribute to the Jews in the first century, buying up the grain and other produce from the agricultural population, and exporting it to harbors on the south coast, or selling it in retail trade in the cities. If this supposition is correct, August is a very likely month for their coming to Lystra, and the stoning of Paul would come some weeks later. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Church in the Roman Empire.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.* The Egyptians and Greeks believed that the gods often assumed human bodies and visited the earth to reward the good and punish the evil. The books of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid record many such visits. Cowper thus translates a passage from Homer:

> For, in similitude of strangers, oft,
> The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
> Repair to populous cities, where they mark
> Th' outrageous, and the righteous deeds of men.

12. *They called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury.* Jupiter was their chief god, and Mercury was the messenger of the gods. Jupiter is represented as old, large, and majestic; Barnabas may have been called Jupiter because he was the older man of the two, as Chrysostom conjectured, and more imposing in appearance. Mercury is represented as young and active and eloquent; Paul was called Mercury "because he was the chief speaker."

Jupiter and Mercury as represented on an ancient altar. Jupiter holds a sceptre and a thunderbolt; Mercury a staff and a bag, the emblem of commerce.

14. *They rent their garments.* It was the custom among the Jews to express their grief or horror or anger by tearing their outer robe from the neck down towards the girdle.

19. *They stoned Paul.* We may take it for granted that Roman law and custom prevailed in the Roman colonies, Antioch and Lystra; and in all probability they exercised great weight even in Iconium. The magistrates could go to very great lengths in the way of summary punishment against any individuals whose action or presence was inconsistent with peace and order. They could turn them out of the city (though not permanently exile them), they could tear their clothes, inflict personal indignities on them, or beat them (unless they were Roman citizens). Though they could not punish a culprit with death, "a regrettable incident," such as a popular riot, might occur, leading to the death of an obnoxious individual, and mildly blamed in public by the magistrates, who privately rejoiced at it. Hence in Iconium and Lystra we may be pretty sure that the magistrates connived at the stoning intended in the one case, and effected in the other. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Church in the Roman Empire.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At Antioch of Pisidia a great crisis occurred in Paul's missionary labors. There he was led to see, and openly to proclaim, that his special mission was to the Gentiles. When he reached Iconium he spoke first in the Jewish synagogue, as was always his custom, and many, both of the Jews and the Gentiles, believed his message. Through the efforts of the hostile Jews the city was divided, part of the people believing the Jews and part the evangelists. Learning that Gentiles and Jews and Roman rulers had combined against them and were purposing to accomplish their deaths by stoning, they fled to Lystra and Derbe and that region, and there preached the gospel.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Paul's first missionary journey by tracing its course on the map. See page 175. From Antioch in Syria to the port of Seleucia, thence by boat to Salamis on the island of Cyprus, across the island to Paphos, by boat to Attalia and then to Perga in Pamphylia, and then northward to Antioch "of Pisidia" on the central tableland. Driven away from Antioch by persecution, Paul and his company went southeastward to Iconium, about eighty-five miles away on a branch of the great "Royal Road," the trade route between the east and the west. Here they remained "a long time" till forced to flee to "the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe and the region round about."

Antioch and Iconium were in "Phrygian Galatia"; Lystra and Derbe, in "Lycaonian Galatia;" Galatia being the name of the great Roman province which extended from north to south across the central plateau of Asia Minor, and Phrygia and Lycaonia the popular names of the southern districts of this province. See map, page 184. This "South Galatian" view is Dr. Ramsay's, who believes that to these four Churches Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians. The older view maintained by many modern scholars, is that the Epistle to the Galatians was written to the churches in the cities of Ancyra, Tavium, and Pessinus in North Galatia, and that Acts 16.6 and 19.1 refer to visits made to these cities. The controversy can not be settled. See page 262.

As there is no mention of any synagogue in Lystra, Paul probably preached in the market-place or on the streets.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. The old Romans, you know, had many gods, and believed that they sometimes came to earth in disguise. Perhaps you have read at school their beautiful legend of Baucis and Philemon, who received Jupiter and Mercury so hospitably when they came to Phrygia, the region where Paul and Barnabas now are in our lessons.

> For harbor at a thousand doors they knocked,
> Not one of all the thousand but was locked;
> At last one hospitable house they found,
> A homely shed; the roof, not far from ground,

as a great Latin poet named Ovid says of this visit of Jupiter and Mercury. Then he describes the way in which two poor people who lived in that "homely shed" did everything in their power to make the two gods comfortable, although they did not know who their guests were; how they were rewarded by having their poor little cottage changed into a magnificent temple; and how they replied, when asked what was their wish—

> We crave to serve before your sacred shrine,
> And offer at your altars rights divine,

and then added another wish, that they might die together. Thus it came to pass, according to the legend, that

> In Phrygian ground
> Two neighboring trees, with walls encompassed round,
> Stand on a moderate rise, with wonder shown,
> One a hard oak, a softer linden one;—

the two trees into which Baucis and Philemon were transformed at the same moment when "their race was run."

This story must have been often repeated to the children at Lystra, and there must have been many a child among them to whom these names were given and to whom their parents hoped these gods would sometime come. Was it any wonder that when Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra and healed a cripple that the people at once thought they must be these gods?

For Older Pupils. Among the Apocryphal writings of the New Testament is one entitled "The Acts of Paul and Theckla." According to this treatise, Theckla, a maiden of Iconium who was bethrothed to a wealthy youth named Thamyris, heard Paul preach and resolved not to marry Thamyris but to follow the fortunes of Paul. Thamyris had both Paul and Theckla arrested. Paul was scourged and expelled from the city, and Theckla was condemned to be burnt. Theckla escaped this and other deaths in a marvelous way; her last days were spent as a preacher at Seleucia. In this legend Paul is described as "a man small in stature, bald-headed, of a good complexion, with eye-brows meeting, and a countenance full of grace. For sometimes he appeared like a man, and sometimes he had, as it were, the face of an angel."

Because of local and historical references in "The Acts of Paul and Theckla" many scholars believe that it was an almost contemporary writing and had some foundation of fact, and they see in it one explanation of the opposition to Paul at Iconium, that his preaching interfered with family life. Whatever the causes, the remembrance of the persecutions endured here remained vivid in Paul's mind. Writing his second letter to Timothy several years later Paul reminds him that he had "followed his persecutions and sufferings, the persecutions that befell him at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, the persecutions he endured."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Men of Like Nature

Men who wished to be worshipped. The Roman Empire deified and wor-

shipped its emperors. In 29 A. D. Augustus Cæsar allowed the diets of the provinces of Asia and Bithynia to erect temples and show divine honor to him. Soon all the chief cities had their Cæsareum and their emperor's festival. In the time of Tiberius one of the reasons given for depriving the city of Cyziars in Asia of its position as a free city was that it had failed to erect a temple to the god Augustus. When Caligula became emperor in 37 A. D. the Romans inscribed his name on a shield of gold and appointed a day on which priests and senators, and their noblest young men and maidens should annually carry it to the Capitol with pæans and prayers. Caligula ordered the statues of the gods replaced by statues of himself, and in the temple dedicated to him he placed a golden image of himself which by his orders was robed each day in garments similar to those he himself wore. Before this image the people fell down and worshipped.

Herod Agrippa of Judea desired to receive divine honors like the Roman emperors. Josephus says of him: "Now, when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cæsarea, and there he exhibited shows in honor of Cæsar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of the shows, he put on a garment of silver tissue, and of a texture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre, early in the morning. The silver of his garment, being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him. Presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another (though not for his good), that he was a god, and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto reverenced thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery."

This is the Herod who sought to have his statue placed in the Holy of Holies of the temple at Jerusalem, and to whom, as you know, the people one day shouted as he sat on his throne, "the voice of a god and not of a man," and immediately an angel of the Lord smote him (Acts 12.23).

The truly Great are truly Humble. It was in an era like this, when everywhere worship was being paid to mortals, that the simple people of Lystra concluded that Paul and Barnabas were deities and sought to sacrifice to them. Do you suppose it was any temptation to Paul and Barnabas? They were Christ's witnesses, and they could accept no impious worship. They were men of like nature with these people, come only to bring them good tidings. The German word for courage is *Muth*, and for humility, *Demuth*. With a play upon words a German writer (Arndt) says that Muth is the essence of Demuth: Courage is the essence of Humility. The essence of Paul's humility was his courage. He was brave enough not to shrink from what he must have known would be the effect of his words, courageous enough to tell the people that their idols were vain things.

When a great Roman general returned home from his victories and was given a brilliant triumphal march through the streets of his native city, a slave walked at his side and every now and then whispered in his ear, "Remember that thou, too, art a man!" No such warning needed Paul, for he, knowing to whom his victories were always due, was ever ready to say, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

A Lesson from Ruskin. The first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power, or hesitation of speaking his opinions, but a right understanding of the relation between what he can do and say, and the rest of the world's doings and sayings. All great men not only know their own business, but usually know that they know it, and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them, only they do not think much of themselves on that accounut. Arnolfo knows that he can build a good dome at Florence; Albrecht Dürer writes calmly to one who has found fault with his work, "It can not be done better"; Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else,—only they do not expect their fellowmen to fall down and worship them. They have a

curious undersense of powerlessness, feeling that the power is not in them, but through them, that they could not do or be anything else than God made them, and they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet.

II Through Nature to God

Paul's Argument. When addressing the Jews Paul led from the Law and Prophets, in which they believed, up to Jesus the Christ, whom they had not accepted; when addressing the Athenians he drew his arguments from their images and temples and literature and conscience in which they were interested; when addressing the heathen people of Lystra he based his arguments on what they could understand, the beneficence of God as revealed in nature. "Several of the heathen philosophers had become acquainted with God through the light of nature," we are reminded by a commentator; "Socrates and Plato, for example, though in a certain sense heathens, yet were in another sense the worshippers of the true God." Paul told the people of Lystra that God had not left them in complete darkness, for He had shown Himself to them in the rain from heaven and the fruits of the fields. He urged them to turn from their useless idols to God who had given them these natural gifts, the living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that in them is. The heathen made gods of the forces of nature, but they had not grasped the thought that there is a living God who far transcends nature.

Nature a Medium through which God acts. The telegraphist is immanent throughout the extended wire on which he operates, yet he is emphatically distinct from the wire. Thus God is immanent through the vast chain of stars which He controls; He must not, however, be confounded with the medium through which He acts. Nor must the Creator be identified with humanity. The biblical doctrine that man is a partaker of the divine nature is entirely different from the oriental faiths which confound man with God. We must look through nature and beyond humanity to the Eternal Spirit, who is neither. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. *W. L. Watkinson,* in *The Supreme Conquest.*

A Prayer.

Thou who has given me eyes to see
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee
And read Thee everywhere. *Keble.*

III Missionary Topic Men that have hazarded their Lives for Christ

Through Many Tribulations. Luke merely mentions the fact that Paul was stoned and his supposedly dead body dragged without the walls, and then hastens on with his narrative, telling how Paul rose up and with courage undaunted entered the city, and on the morrow went to Derbe, several miles away. Neither the historian of the Acts nor the apostles themselves made much of the persecutions and hardships endured by the followers of Christ. Had He not told them that they must suffer? To suffer for His sake they accounted only glory. After preaching in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas went back to Lystra, and Iconium and Antioch, and in his exhortation to the disciples in these cities Paul told them that "Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God."

This word *tribulations* carries in itself a rich lesson. It is derived from the Latin word *tribulum,* which means *threshing-sledge.* Underneath the threshing-sledge were sharp teeth of iron or rock, and when it was drawn over the grain by oxen these teeth bruised and broke into pieces the straw and chaff, and separated from them the wheat. As the threshing-sledge performed a good service for the wheat, so tribulations rightly borne will do much for human nature. "We rejoice in our tribulations," said Paul in his letter to the Romans, "knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness; and steadfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope."

Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God. "We so often complain of Providence because we forget its design," says a great English preacher. "Does God rule the world to the end of making us rich, great,

or happy? Were this the objective, the course of the divine government would present, indeed, a series of sad blunders. But the goal of life is not personal enjoyment, social distinction, or material aggrandizement; it is a moral discipline, it designs the sanctification of our spirit, it is that we should be fit for the presence, joy and service of the holy God. Could we understand the relation of each painful event to our spiritual perfecting, we should talk less of the imperfections of His government."

The Missionary Spirit. There is no history so thrilling, so full of adventure, containing so many wonderful examples of heroism and zeal, as the history of the pioneer missionaries in heathen lands and in the wild frontier regions of our own land. Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the council at Jerusalem called the first missionaries, Paul and Barnabas; their successors have been legion.

If you have read the biography of Robert Moffatt you recall that scene where the South African chief with a dozen men stood holding aloft poisoned spears, about to plunge them into his body. He had been repairing his wagon, and his wife stood by when the men came upon him. Dropping his tools and baring his breast the great missionary calmly said: "Your threats are vain. We have come to bless you, and here we stay. If you are bound to be rid of us, do what you will. But our hearts are with you and we shall stay with you till we are killed. Now spear me, if you will, and when you have slain me, others like me will come to take up the work." The spears dropped as the chief said to his men, "These missionaries are so fearless of death, they must have ten lives: there must be another life beyond." The spirit of Robert Moffatt is the spirit that has animated all true-hearted missionaries. They have hazarded and spent their lives for the people among whom they have worked.

SENTENCE SERMONS

In the long run, we really love the sternest things in life best. *John Addington Symonds.*

The more any man has of Christ in him, the more humble will he be; when God renews His image in us, He pulls down our proud thoughts. *Mather Mather.*

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small,"—too small to be worth talking about, for the day of adversity is its first real opportunity. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Not only does tribulation stand at the threshold of the kingdom of God but on the threshold of every kingdom that it is worth your while as young men to enter. *Charles Leach.*

Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him: the man who has acquired such faith as this is the true freeman of the universe, clad in stoutest coat of mail against disaster and sophistry—the man whom nothing can enslave, and whose guerdon is the serene happiness that can never be taken away. *John Fiske.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Barnabas exhorted those in Antioch of Syria who had recently become disciples to cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart. Paul exhorted the recent converts at Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium and Lystra to continue in the faith. This is the exhortation that disciples, everywhere, whether new or old, continually need.

Have we learned the lesson which Paul taught those primitive people of Lystra, that God is the Giver of good, that we are indebted to Him for all the things of life?

Paul's work was never stopped by persecution or difficulties. He knew the dangers of opposing that excited throng who were bent on worshipping him,—the danger of entering the city again after being left for dead without the walls, the danger of stopping there on his return journey, but his courage was ever undaunted, his difficulties were only delights, his sufferings only incidents necessary to be borne in the course of his work. Can we study the record of so heroic a life and not let its example influence our lives? Can we allow ourselves to be turned aside by trifling difficulties from whatever our hand finds to do?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

When Paul and Barnabas were preaching at Lystra, they had among their listeners a cripple who had been lame from birth. Paul noticed his eager attention and believed that he had faith to be made whole. "Stand upright on thy feet," he commanded him, and the cripple at once leaped up and walked. So astonished were the people who saw him that they declared Paul and Barnabas must be gods in human form, Barnabas, the more reserved, being their chief god, Jupiter, and Paul, the chief speaker, being Mercury, the god of eloquence. In their excitement they used their native Lycaonian dialect, instead of Greek which was the universal language in the Roman Empire at this time. Evidently Paul and Barnabas did not understand their shouts, and returned to their abiding place. The news was brought to the priest of Jupiter, whose temple stood before the city. Sacrifice must be offered before these gods, instead of in the temple area, he at once decided, and had the oxen, gaily decorated with garlands for the sacrifice, brought in solemn procession to the temple gates.

Rending their garments as they ran in token of their horror at the sacrilege, Paul and Barnabas rushed into the crowd as soon as they learned their intention, and Paul cried out, "Why do ye these things? We are human beings, men of the same nature as you, and come to you with good tidings, seeking to turn you from those vain gods and temples and sacrifices to the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth and sea and all things in them." Until now God had left them to their own ways, and yet they had not been wholly without knowledge of Him, for His gifts had borne witness to Him, His rains and fruitful seasons had furnished them food and brought them gladness, Paul reminded them.

With difficulty Paul thus restrained the people from offering sacrifice to him. Provoked with themselves, doubtless, for having made a mistake and offered undue honor to Paul, they were easily persuaded to turn against him by the hostile Jews who had come to Lystra from Antioch and Iconium. They stoned Paul, and supposing him to be dead they dragged his body outside of the city walls. As the disciples stood around him mourning, Paul arose. He entered the city, and the next day went with Barnabas to Derbe. After preaching and gaining many disciples in that city, they retraced their steps to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, exhorting the disciples there to remain steadfast in their faith, and to remember that "through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God." They organized their churches, appointing elders among them, and after seasons of prayer and fasting in each place they left Pisidia for Pamphylia.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul's adaptation of his words to the people addressed.
2. Meeting heathen on common ground. Like Paul, missionary workers should seek to turn the allegiance of the heathen from their false gods to the living God, not to overthrow all their religious ideas at once.
3. The revelation of God in nature. See Rom. 1.18-23.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Review the earlier lessons which show the progress of mission work among those not Jews, lessons IX and X of the first quarter, and I, IV-VII of the second quarter. 2. Read carefully the 15th chapter of Acts and the 2d chapter of Galatians. 3. Were the men who came from Judea, verse 1, sent by the Church at Jerusalem? (Verse 24.) 4. Where were some of the churches through which the delegation passed on its way to Jerusalem? (Acts 8.5, 40; 9.32; 11.19.) 5. To what Jewish sect had Paul belonged? (Phil. 3.5.) 6. What was Peter's argument in behalf of the Gentiles? (Verses 7-11.) 7. What was James'? (Verses 13-18.) 8. Read James 3.13-18, and tell what sort of wisdom is coveted. 9. Read Paul's account of the way he hazarded his life in II Cor. 11.23-27. 10. What was his advice to the Corinthians in regard to eating meat offered to idols? (1 Cor. 10.25-29.) 11. What missionary journey did Silas share with Paul, in greater part? (Second.) 12. What conduct of Peter's at Antioch afterwards caused great trouble? (Gal. 2.11-21.)

LESSON VIII—MAY 23

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

Read Acts 15.1-35. Commit verses 28, 29.

Golden Text

We believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in like manner as they. Acts 15.11.

LESSON TEXT Acts 15.1-5, 22-29

1 And certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, *saying*, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, *the brethren* appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. 3 They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. 5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses....

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 and they wrote *thus* by them, The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; 25 it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29 that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Certain men.* In one version these words are added, *of those who had believed of the sect of the Pharisees.* See verse 5.—*Saved.* Compare Paul's doctrine in Acts 16.33.

2. *Should go up to Jerusalem.* In the Bezan text, a Greek manuscript written in the 6th century, these words occur; But they that had come up from Jerusalem charged them, Paul and Barnabas and certain others, to go up to the apostles and presbyters at Jerusalem in order to be judged before them. In Gal. 2.2 Paul says *I went up by revelation.* The inference is that he would not go up "to be judged," but would go when divinely directed.—*Certain others.* Titus was one, according to Gal. 2.1-3.

3. *They therefore being brought on their way by the church.* Compare Acts 20.38; 21.5. They were doubtless escorted by others as far as Seleucia.

4, 5. The sect of the Pharisees. Paul had been a Pharisee. See his words about these troublesome men in Gal. 2.4.

22. *Judas called Barnabas and Silas.* Judas may have been, as often suggested, the brother of the Joseph Barsabbas mentioned in Acts 1.23, and Silas a Hellenist, (he is given his full Latin name, Silvanus, in the epistles), a Roman citizen (Acts 16.37).

24. *Subverting your souls.* The Greek participle ἀνασκευάζοντες means literally *packing up the baggage,* breaking up camp for the march, and then *turning furniture upside down,* in dismantling a house. The trouble was unsettling their faith.—The words "saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law" are omitted in the Revised Version as an addition by a copyist.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1. *After the custom of Moses.* Jewish Christianity failed to dominate the growing church throughout the world, and coincidently with this failure its importance in Christian history gradually diminished. When Jewish Christianity once suffered the loss of its leadership and control, its case was hopeless. In the year 70 Jerusalem was taken by Titus, the temple burned, and the city, excepting a few towers and parts of the walls, razed to the ground. Some years before this James, the Christian leader, had been put to death, on charges which are obscure to us, by the Sadducean authorities. Not long after that the usual conditions of turbulence in Palestine were greatly aggravated; Jerusalem soon became a horrible scene of bloody partisan strife and mob violence; and at last the Christians—how many in number we know not—withdrew from the Holy City, fled across the Jordan, and took up their residence in the Gentile town of Pella. Without a center, without any important general organization, without any great leader, Jewish Christianity as a distinctive power in the Christian Church came to an end. There continued to be Christians in Palestine. Some of these, like Hegesippus in the second century, entered wholly into sympathy with general church thought. Others maintained their natural character and were more or less known to Christian writers as Nazarene or Ebionite Christians. Cut off from the main Church, and treated as heretics, they gradually disappear from view. It seems almost like irony when about 150 A. D., eighty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Justin Martyr actually apologizes for his own liberality in holding that some Christians who observe the institutions of Judaism can be saved. It marks the complete reduction of specific Jewish Christianity to the position of a half-tolerated sect. *James Hardy Ropes,* in *The Apostolic Age.*

25. *Having come to one accord.* Read Gal. 2.11-21. The difficulty of overcoming Jewish prejudices is shown in the vacillation of Peter during his visit to Antioch after the council. Though he had proposed the admission of the Gentiles on the simple condition of their faith in Christ, and for a time had associated with them, yet the hostility of the Pharisaic believers intimidated him, and he again became a separatist. Barnabas, too, Paul's companion in the ministering to the Gentiles, fell away. Paul's rebuke of Peter is one of the first illustrations of his manly courage (Gal. 2.14). Thus through the guidance of the Spirit a great trial was met and the unity of the Church was preserved. *George R. Crooks,* in *The Story of the Christian Church.*

Obviously the rebuke which Paul gave must have been successful in the case of Peter and Barnabas; the immediate success of his appeal to their better feelings constitutes the whole force of his argument to the Galatians. The power of his letter to them lies in this, that the mere statement of the earlier stages of the controversy is sufficient to show the impregnability of his position and the necessity of his free and generous policy; the narrow Judaizing tyranny was self-condemned; Peter was wholly with him, and so was Barnabas; and the victory had been gained, not by listening to the older apostles, but by obeying "the good pleasure of God, who called me by his grace to preach him among the Gentiles." *W. M. Ramsay,* in *St. Paul the Traveller.*

28. *These necessary things.* The injunctions are imposed upon the Gentile Christians, not so much because these things, as a whole, are in themselves God's first and most indispensable command to all men, but because they con-

tain the minimum necessary on account of their connection with Jews. And, secondly, they have specially in view the conscientious convictions and opinions of the general body of the Jews. *Carl Weizsäcker,* in *The Apostolic Age.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *Being brought on their way by the church.* In telling of the departure of the three men who visited Abraham and announced that he should have a son, it says in Genesis that "the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to bring them on their way." It is still customary in the East to accompany a distinguished guest for a short distance on his way.

23. *They wrote thus by them.* Not only would the letter answer as the credentials of the messengers, Judas and Silas, proving to the churches that they were not like their earlier visitors from Jerusalem to whom the Church "gave not commandment," but the messengers would certify to the truth of the letter, for forged letters were not uncommon in those days.

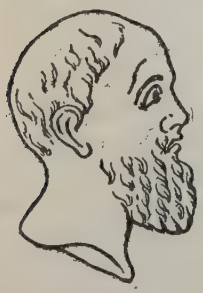
23. *The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles.* The second Book of Maccabees begins in a similar way, "The brethren, the Jews who are in Jerusalem and in the land of Judæa, to the brethren, the Jews who are in Egypt." But what a marvel has been wrought among these exclusive Jews that they now address Gentiles as "brethren"! The Mohammedans of Palestine to-day would not address the Christians there as "brethren."

28. *No greater burden than these necessary things.* The "necessary things" are four in number. The followers of Mohammed in Palestine have directions given them in their laws as to what they must do in sixteen hundred different cases!

29. *That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols.* The Gentiles slew animals in sacrifice to their idols and then sold the flesh; to eat such flesh was to the Jews to share in the heathen sacrifice. *From blood.* The blood was to the Jews the life. See Gen. 9.4. *From things strangled.* "When animals are killed for food," sayes a native of Palestine to-day, "the main artery in the neck must be severed, and the blood thoroughly drained, for no blood must ever enter into any food whatsoever."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Paul's first missionary journey took him in a round-about course as far as Derbe in Lycaonia. On his return he visited the churches which he had founded at Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia, and preached at Perga in Pamphylia, and from Attalia sailed back to Seleucia in Syria, and then on foot returned to the church at Antioch from which he had started. To the church he reported "all things that God had done with them," and gave as the great result of his work the fact that "God had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles." This truth Peter had learned at Joppa and Cæsarea, and the Church at Jerusalem had learned through him, but it had been applied to only a few special cases, and the far-reaching consequences to the Church had not been foreseen. Now a crisis has come. The door for the Gentiles was too widely opened by Paul to suit the Jerusalem Church. They wished to place a stumbling-block in the road which would effectually prevent all not Jews from entering that door, for by insisting that the Gentiles must first be circumcised after the custom of Moses, they insisted that Gentiles must first become Jews before they could become Christians.



Paul. From a Medallion found in the Catacombs at Rome.

The year is given as 49 A. D. See the table giving the chronology of Paul's life according to several authorities, page 19.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is first at Antioch in Syria, where the dissenters from Jerusalem came. Then the delegates, Paul and Barnabas and others, were escorted on their way by the church, perhaps as far as Seleucia on the coast. Their course was through Phœnicia and Samaria. As Galilee is not named, they probably went southward along the coast, passing through the cities of Sidon and Tyre and on to Ptolemais, and then crossed the Plain of Esdraelon into Samaria and turned southward to Jerusalem.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Three hundred years ago James I was King of England. He claimed that he ruled "by divine right," that his word was law, and his people had no rights that he needed to respect unless he wished. Among his people were some who did not like all the forms and ceremonies of the Church in England, the Established Church, as it is called. King James would not allow them to form a separate church, where they could elect their own minister and manage their own affairs, and when they tried to do this some of them were put in prison. They escaped to Holland, where they could worship as they pleased. But they did not wish their children to become Dutch, and in 1620 these Pilgrims sailed in the Mayflower for America, and landed at Plymouth.

"They have left unstained what there they found—Freedom to worship God."

The Jews of Judea even after they became Christians insisted that all who would be Christians must keep all their Jewish forms and ceremonies. Like King James of England they felt that to them had been given the divine right to say what should be done in all religious questions. They found that beyond Judea Paul had been establishing churches where Gentiles were received as members. These Gentiles would not adopt all their Jewish ceremonies. Paul said they need not. The Church at Jerusalem said they must. Our lesson tells us how the question was raised and settled.

For Older Pupils. See the Historical Background. "The things that God had done" through Paul were great, but marvelous was the thing which God had done in Paul himself during this first missionary journey. He, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, trained in all the strictest laws of his nation, has become the most liberal of all the Jews, has learned that his mission is to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, is firm in his belief that he is doing God's will, is immovable in his determination to champion the cause of the Gentiles against all attacks. How did he come to this belief?

For the stand taken by the Church at Jerusalem there is much to be said. The rite of circumcision had been observed since the days of Abraham, and no law from God or from Jesus the Christ had been voiced abrogating it. Jesus had proclaimed: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfil." Who, then, had authority to declare the rite unnecessary? To Peter had come a vision, and as a result the Gentile Cornelius and his household had been received into the Church at Cæsarea, but the lesson had been quickly forgotten. What right had Paul to adopt his revolutionizing procedure and say that "circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing"?

Paul had the right of a revelation from God, a revelation shown, not by vision nor by word of prophet, but by results that proved God's will and purpose. God, who knoweth the heart, had borne the Gentiles witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto the Jews; and he had made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, cleansing their hearts by faith. God's will is shown in His ways with men as well as through His words to men. "Truth grafts itself on previous truth, modifying it in the process, just as idiom grafts itself on previous idiom, and law on previous law," says a great psychologist. On the truth as revealed to the nation of Israel is now grafted the truth as revealed to the Gentile nations, and in the process the new truth has modified the old.

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LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I How to know God's Will

It seemed Good to the Holy Spirit and to us. In the letter written by the Church at Jerusalem to the Church at Antioch, the decision in regard to mooted questions between Jews and Gentiles is declared to be the will of the Holy Spirit as well as of the "Mother Church." How had they arrived at this decision? They had met in council and discussed the question; arguments for and against had been raised and weighed; they had used their minds as though all depended on them alone; they had doubtless sought in prayer to know God's will, and they believed that the Holy Spirit was guiding their judgment even as Christ had promised. Had He not said, When the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth?

The Guidance of the Indwelling Spirit. It sometimes seems as though Paul and Barnabas and the other great leaders in the early Church were guided by God in a peculiar way, that to them was given the power to know God's will as it is not given to men in these days. But those great men were guided by God's voice within. There is in every one a religious consciousness which tells him what he ought to do, and this *ought* is God's will for him. If he heeds the promptings of this indwelling Spirit, he, too, can say that his decision "seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to him."

The Guidance of the Scriptures. God has revealed His will in His Word. The Bible records God's dealings with His chosen people in countless experiences of life; it is full of principles for right conduct rather than of specific rules, and these principles are our guide to His will for us now. Especially has He revealed His will through the life and teachings of His Son. If we have made these teachings ours, our minds will act in accord with them, and our decisions will thus be in harmony with God's purposes.

The Guidance of the Combination of Circumstances. Paul's trust in God was so perfect that he seemed to feel that he could not mistake His will, and at the same time he planned his work for God as though its success depended on himself alone. In the next chapter of the Acts (XVI), we are told that he was "forbidden by the Spirit to speak the word in Asia," as he had planned to do; that he tried to go into Bithynia, "but the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not"; how he was forbidden we are not told, but it is reasonable to infer that a combination of circumstances convinced him that he should not preach in these districts at this time. The Reverend G. Campbell Morgan has a helpful word on this guidance: "In the fact of the divine government," he says, "this may be spoken of as the opening and shutting of doors. The open door does not necessarily mean the easy pathway. The open door is an opportunity created, which is in harmony with the principles of the divine government, and the desire for which has been created in that fellowship with God into which no other interest has been allowed to enter. Desires based on motives other than the highest will often discover open doors which are quite other than those which God would open."

The Testimony of Abraham Lincoln. The Almighty does make use of human agencies and directly intervenes in human affairs. I have had so many evidences of His direction, so many instances where I have been controlled by some other Power than my own will, that I can not doubt that this power comes from above. I am confident that when the Almighty wants me to do, or not to do, a particular thing, He finds a way of letting me know it.

II How to Settle Differences

The Lesson from the Council at Jerusalem. The Book of Acts records five distinct visits to Jerusalem made by Paul after his conversion. The Epistle to the Galatians records but two, the one three years after his conversion, the other fourteen years later. The second journey recorded in Gal. 2.1-10 is believed by many scholars to be the one recorded in our lesson from the 15th chapter of Acts. One English commentator combines the two accounts thus: "There is (1) Gal. 2.1-2a, the going up to Jerusalem: (2) Acts 15.4-5, the public reception (Gal. 2.2b, at which Paul states his gospel): (3) Gal. 2.3-5, the

affair of Titus' circumcision: (4) Gal. 2.6-10, with 2c, the private conferences of the apostles: (5) Acts 15.6+, the meeting of the council and decision.

Feeling was intense at that Council in Jerusalem. The strict Pharasaical believers saw the revolutionary tendency of Paul's free gospel, honestly believed that all the Mosaic law must be lived up to, and felt that they were defending the faith of their fathers. Paul and his party knew that the peaceful course of their work was at stake, believed that Jewish rites were not necessary for salvation, and were firm in their determination to stand by a principle which meant so much in their work for God. There was free expression of thought, but there was none of bitterness of feeling. The main point at issue was decided on its merits. The conditions imposed rendered it possible for Jews and Gentiles to live together in harmony, and were a concession to the Jews, for there was "give and take" on both sides of the controversy, and the concession as to food was a reasonable one for the time being. Would that disputed questions in churches to-day were discussed and settled as wisely as this one of the early Church!

Paul's Way. Paul's beautiful yieldingness in every matter that touched his own opinions or his own practices, taken along with his iron will in what was not his own; these two things must be taken together to know Paul. Luther hits the whole matter here in a way that would have delighted Paul. "If two goats meet each other in a narrow path above a piece of water, what do they do?" asks Luther. "They can not turn back, and they can not pass each other; there is not an inch of spare room. If they were to butt at each other, both would fall into the water below and be drowned. What will they do, do you suppose? What would you do? Well, Nature has taught the one goat to lie down to let the other pass over it, and then they both get to the end of the way safe and sound." Now, Paul was always meeting goats on narrow ledges of rock with the sea below. And so are you, and so am I. Will you lie down and let me pass over your prostrate body, and then we shall both be saved? *Alexander Whyte, The Apostle Paul.*

Advice of Epictetus. Every matter hath two handles: by the one it may be carried; by the other, not. If thy brother do thee wrong, take not this thing by the handle, He wrongs me; for that is the handle whereby it may not be carried. But take it rather by the handle, He is my brother, nourished with me; and thou wilt take it by a handle whereby it may be carried.

III Missionary Topic Christianity a Universal Religion

What the Decision of the Council meant. The question of the terms on which Gentiles should be admitted into the Christian Church involved the whole relation of Christianity and Judaism. A decision in accordance with the demand of those Pharisees who came down of their own accord from Judea to Antioch would have limited the Christianity to the Jewish race together with a very small number of Gentiles "half-Christian" followers. The decision reached by the body of apostles and elders in Jerusalem was that to keep the law of Moses was not necessary for salvation, that Christianity could not be limited to those who carried out Jewish forms and ceremonies, that it is a universal religion, for people of all lands and nationalities and customs.

Christianity can not be limited to the White Race. It is barely possible Moses felt that God might be the God of the Jews only, and so he asked His name. "I am that I am" is God's answer to Moses. In this divine definition, God=God, you can not put Jehovah on one side of the proposition and complete the proposition by adding "Jehovah equals the God of the Jews." You can not even make Jehovah the Lord of all the earth, and say "Jehovah equals the God of our planet." This definition sweeps us beyond the conception of tribal divinities—one God for the Anglo-Saxons and another for the Chinese. We have no more right to limit the light of the Sun of Righteousness to the Anglo-Saxons than we have the right or the power to limit the sunlight to the European or American continents. It is a false liberalism which says: The Chinese have Confucius and the Western nations Christ, and we ought not to disturb the empire and create strife by attempting to overthrow established customs and national religion. The advocates of that theory assume, as did the Jews of old,

that the God of revelation belongs to us alone. Pray how did we capture Him from the Jews to whom He originally belonged? If God is the God of the universe, if Jesus Christ is really He through whom all things were made and without whom was not anything made that was made, then he is the Saviour of all men, and we have no justification for robbing the people of India and of China of their birthright. Condensed from a chapter in *God's Missionary Plan for the World,* by *Bishop J. W. Bashford.*

The Proof that Christianity is for All Peoples. One of the first converts of Neesima in Japan was an influential citizen of a suberb of Kioto. When it became known he was at once summoned to appear before the Kioto magistrates. In the course of the conversation, one of the officials said: "We have good and sufficient religion here in Japan; we do not want any more. We have Confucianism for scholars like you, and Buddhism for the masses."

To this Neesima replied: "If Confucianism is an all-sufficient religion, why is it, since the founder lived thousands of years before Christ and taught during a long life, that it has not spread beyond China and Japan? And if Buddhism is an all-sufficient religion, how is it, started by Buddha thousands of years before Christ, and taught by him through a long life, that it has not spread beyond India, China and Japan? And if Christianity is a bad religion, how is it, since its Founder only taught three years, and was put to death when He was thirty-three years old, that it has spread all over Europe and America, and is spreading all over Africa and Asia and all the islands of the sea?"

This story is quoted in "Missionary Comments" prepared for the Young People's Missionary Movement, and these words are added: "When Jesus is received into the heart, He is as much at home in the cities by the Indus and the Nile as in those by the Hudson and the Clyde. We can not think of a Western Mohammed. We can hardly think of a Western Buddha, but you discover nothing local or provincial about Jesus Christ. It makes not the least difference where men may preach His gospel; to the most cultured Europeans or the most barbarous Africans, to the thoughtful Hindus or to the North American savages, among the naked Hottentots or among the fur-clad Esquimaux; He finds a true home in the hearts of all who receive Him, because He is the universal Man, and even the three hundred names given Him in the Scriptures do not exhaust His million-sided personality."

SENTENCE SERMONS

The world is my parish. *John Wesley.*

"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity."

The only way to get at what is right is to do what seems right. *Macdonald.*

Conscience represents God and acts in His stead. *Newell Dwight Hillis.*

"A little explained, a little endured,
A little forgiven, the quarrel is cured."

The surest method of arriving at a knowledge of God's eternal purpose about us is to be found in the right use of the present moment; each hour comes with some little fagot of God's will fastened on its back. *F. W. Faber.*

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him. Rom. 10.12.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

The one thing for which Paul is best remembered is his insight into the fact that the gospel is for all people. We know this truth, but are we, too, doing our part toward giving the gospel to all?

To the Jews the restrictions imposed on the Gentiles in regard to food were of the greatest importance; to the Gentiles they were nothing, but in order to live comfortably with the Jews they were asked to observe them. In our life with one another there must always be a giving up of unessentials for the sake of peace.

It is right to say, I wish I knew God's will more perfectly, said Dr. M. D. Babcock; but it is better to pray, O God, help me to do Thy will, as I know it, more perfectly than ever. This is a petition that everyone needs to offer.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Until Paul took up the work, the Christian churches, like the Jewish synagogues, with a few exceptions were composed of Jews and of proselytes, the proselytes being Gentiles who had received the Jewish rite of circumcision. In attendance there were also the "God-fearing" or "devout" Gentiles, who, not having been circumcised, were not in "full fellowship" with the rest. News of the reception of Gentiles into the churches founded by Paul aroused the anger of certain members of the Judean Church, and they came to Antioch in Syria and declared that unless all were circumcised according to the custom of Moses they could not be saved. After much discussion the Church appointed Paul and Barnabas and others a committee to discuss the question with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Escorted on their way by the Church, this committee went southward through Phœnicia and Samaria, and their journey was almost a demonstration, for their report of the conversion of the Gentiles produced great joy among the churches on the way.

Arrived at Jerusalem, they were honorably received by the whole Church, to whom they gave an account of what had taken place in the newly-founded Churches. Then certain Pharisees arose and said, "It is needful to circumcise them and to charge them to keep the law of Moses."

So great a subject, one that involved the question whether the gospel was for all the Gentiles or only for the few who would first become Jews, could not be settled at once. Apostles and elders met to discuss the question. (Gal. 2.2.) Then came the public meeting. Peter arose and said: "God through me gave the gospel to the Gentiles. God makes no distinction between them and us, giving them also the witness of the Holy Spirit, and wherefore should we put a new yoke upon them? We, like them, are saved, not by circumcision, but by the grace of the Lord Jesus." After Paul and Barnabas had told of the wonders wrought by God among the Gentiles, James arose and said: "Peter has told you that God has given the gospel to the Gentiles. This has been foretold by prophecy. God promised that He would return to build the tabernacle of David in order that all the Gentiles might seek Him. Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those Gentiles who turn to God, but ask them only to abstain from four things, the food that has been polluted by first having been offered to idols, fornication, what has been strangled, and blood. This they should do because of the feeling of the Jews who are found in every city."

The words of Peter and Paul and James carried the day. The whole Church agreed to send two of their chief men, Judas and Silas, to Antioch with Paul to explain their decision. By these men a letter was sent which greeted the Gentiles as brethren, informed them that those from Jerusalem who had stirred up the trouble had not been acting under the authority of the church, commended Paul and Barnabas as beloved brethren who had hazarded their lives for the Lord, reported a unanimous decision, given through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that no further burden should be placed on the Gentile Christians than the abstaining from the four things enumerated by James.

The letter was received with great rejoicing at Antioch. Judas and Silas, after exhorting the Church, returned to Jerusalem, but Paul and Barnabas remained with them for some time, preaching and teaching.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The passing of Jewish Christianity.
2. The value of rites in Christian worship.
3. Christ's law for the settlement of controversies. **Chapters 8, 9, 10 of** "Christianity and Social Problems," by Dr. Lyman Abbott.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the whole Epistle of James. 2. What does verse 16 mean? 3. Verse 18? 4. Tell the story of Abraham's willingness to offer up Isaac. (Gen. 22. 1-19.) 5. Where in the Bible is Abraham called "the friend of God"? (2 Chron. 20.7; Isa. 41.8.) 6. Tell the story of Rahab's saving the lives of the spies. (Josh. 2.1-21; 6.22, 23.)

LESSON IX—MAY 30

BELIEVING AND DOING

Read James 2.14-26. Commit verse 26.

Golden Text

Faith apart from works is barren. James 2.20.

LESSON TEXT James 2.14-26

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. 18 Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from *thy* works, and I by my works will show thee *my* faith. 19 Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; 23 and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. 24 Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. 25 And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

14. *What doth it profit.* The Greek means literally *what is the use.—If a man say he hath faith. Say* is the emphatic word.—*Can that faith.* Not *faith,* as in the A. V., but *that faith,* such lifeless faith as leads not to works. See Jas. 1.23-27.

16. *Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled.* Mere kind wishes.

17. *Even so.* Even as words of charity without deeds is dead.—*Is dead in itself.* Life is seen by action, true faith is seen by its works.

18. *A man will say.* "A person who agrees with James and is here introduced to impart liveliness to the discussion."—*Show me thy faith apart from thy works.* You can not prove to me without the fruit of faith that you have true faith.

19. *Thou believest that God is one.* Deut. 6.4. There is such a thing as mere assent to a doctrine, a theoretical faith.—*The demons also believe.* See Matt. 8.29.

20. *Wilt thou know?* Art thou willing to learn the truth?

21. *Justified.* "Declared just; *i. e.* pleasing to God" (*Weiss*).—*He offered up Isaac.* Gen. 22.1-19; Heb. 11.17.

22. *Made perfect.* "Fully realized, completed; not proved or verified but perfected" (*Schaff*). "Even true faith will soon die, if its possessor does not live in the spirit of obedience" (*Clark*).

23. *The scripture.* Gen. 15.6. Quoted by Paul in Rom. 4.3, and Gal. 3.6.—*He was called.* Isa. 41.8; 2 Chron. 20.7.

25. *She received his messengers.* Josh. 2.1-21; 6.22, 23.

26. *The spirit.* "The spirit here may either be the intelligent spirit—the soul of man; or the breath of life—the living principle" (*Schaff*). A. V. M., *breath.*

SUGGESTIVE WORDS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1. *What doth it profit?*

Heaven doth with us, as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. *Shakespeare.*

14. *Can that faith save him?* We are assured that an educated Hindu will pass an examination in hygiene, and then look on complacently while every imaginable sanitary law is violated within the walls of his own compound. He does not so realize his science as to appreciate its practical import, he is content with the abstruse knowledge, never proceeding to apply it. Does that faith save him? Is the educated Hindu in his filthy compound delivered by his abstract knowledge from enteric, plague, cholera? We know that his theoretic science gives him no immunity whatever, he falls a victim to the prevailing epidemic just as readily as do those who never heard of any science of health. Likewise the nominal saint masters the creed; sometimes in actual experience and conduct he violates every great spiritual and moral law. Will *his* faith save him? Nay, *does* it save him? Does it save in the day of temptation, enabling the tempted one to put away the evil thing? Does it save in the day of trouble, bringing strong consolation into the stricken heart?

And what fails to save here and now is not likely to save us elsewhere and hereafter. That faith, and that faith alone, which is genuine enough and strong enough to bring peace and purity now, can secure us eternal salvation. What stops with fancy and dreams is of little count in any department of life, least of all in questions of character and destiny. *W. L. Watkinson,* in *The Duty of Imperial Thinking.*

23. *He was called the friend of God.*

That man lives twice who lives the first life well,
Make then, while yet ye may, your God your friend.
Robert Herrick.

24. *By works a man is justified and not only by faith.* As to the relation between faith and works and their connection with justification at the tribunal of God, James seems to teach the doctrine of justification by faith and works; while Paul teaches the doctrine of justification by faith alone, to be followed by good works, as the necessary evidence of faith. The two views as thus stated are embodied in the Roman Catholic and the Evangelical Protestant confessions, and form one of the chief topics of controversy. But the contradiction between James and Paul is verbal rather than logical and doctrinal, and admits of a reconciliation which lies in the inseparable connection of a living faith and good works, or of justification and sanctification, so that they supplement and confirm each other, the one laying the true foundation in character, the other insisting on the practical manifestation. James wrote probably long before he had seen any of Paul's Epistles, certainly with no view to refute his doctrine or even to guard it against Antinomian abuse.

James says: Faith is dead without works. Paul says: Works are dead without faith. The one insists on a working faith, the other on faithful works. Both are right: James in opposition to the dead Jewish orthodoxy, Paul in opposition to self-righteous legalism. James does not demand works without faith, but works prompted by faith, while Paul, on the other hand, likewise declares a faith worthless which is without love, though it remove mountains, and would never have attributed a justifying power to the mere belief in the existence of God, which James calls the trembling faith of demons. But James mainly looks at the fruit, Paul at the root; the one is concerned for the evidence, the other for the principle; the one takes the practical and experimental view, and reasons from the effect to the cause, the other goes deeper to the inmost springs of action, but comes to the same result: a holy life of love and obedience as the necessary evidence of true faith. And this, after all, is the ultimate standard of judgment according to Paul as well as James. Paul puts the solution of the difficulty in one sentence: "Faith working through love." This is the Irenicon of contending apostles and contending churches. Neither faith nor works can subsist alone. *Phillip Schaff,* in *the History of the Christian Church.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

19. *Thou believest that there is one God.* This particular article of faith is chosen from a Jewish point of view, because the Jews put a high value on it, as that which distinguished them from the rest of the world. And it is still the boast of the Jews that their national vocation is to be witnesses of the unity of the God-head. Hence: Thou hast more knowledge and a more correct faith than the Gentiles, who have gods many and lords many. *Philip Schaff.*

23. *He was called the friend of God.* Mohammedans of to-day call Abraham, not by his proper name, but by the phrase El-Khalil-Allah, the Friend of God, and to the town of Hebron they have given this name, El-Khalil.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Briefly review last week's lesson. The contention of the Hebrew Christians from Judea that the Gentiles at Antioch could not be saved unless they were circumcised after the custom of Moses, shows that though these Judaizers had acknowledged a belief in Jesus as the Saviour, they had not changed in any way their customs. They were "zealous for the law"; that it should be kept in its minutest particulars was still of chief importance in their eyes. To similar Jews who asked Jesus "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus had replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6.28, 29). This was the teaching of Paul, everywhere he put the emphasis on faith in Jesus, Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16.31), have such faith as will lead to the working of the works of God, even as Jesus Himself taught. But Paul's teaching was misinterpreted by some, who held that belief in the fact that Jesus is the Messiah was saving faith, works were not necessary. There seems to have arisen the beginning of that creed afterwards known as Antinomianism (from ἀντι, against, and νμοός, law), *i. e.* faith without works. This tendency James, the president of the Church at Jerusalem, forcibly rebukes in the Epistle which we study to-day. As Arnot well says, Paul and James do not stand face to face fighting each other, as so many have assumed, but back to back fighting opposite foes. Paul's foes are those who think faith a mere intellectual matter, and works the means of their justification; James foes are those who think works of little consequence, and mere intellectual faith their justification. See Dr. Schaff's words on p. 207.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A farmer in Scotland found that his fine field of clover was being eaten off by some animal. No straying cow was ever seen there, and yet the clover was slowly disappearing. One Sunday morning he rose before daybreak and went out to his field, and there saw his neighbor's cow busily feeding. Around her neck a very long rope was fastened, and on his own door-step sat her owner holding in one hand the end of the rope and in the other an open Bible in which he was reading. "Are ye trying to make them square, Taumas?" asked the farmer as he pointed to the rope and the book.

This is the lesson that James, the president of the Church at Jerusalem, teaches in his Epistle, that belief and actions must square. Stealing fodder for his cow from a neighbor's field does not agree well with the claim to piety made by reading the Bible at the same time. One who believes Jesus will wish to obey Him. His words and his actions will square. The right kind of faith will lead to the right kind of action.

What is James' first question? By *works* here James means right deeds. If a man does not do right deeds then he has not the right faith, for faith and works must agree. Suppose a poor man comes to you who needs clothing and food; would it do him any good for you just to tell him to be warmed and fed and not do anything toward making him so? James asks, and of course he means that you must do something for him to prove that you really wish him to be warmed and fed. (Take up third topic.)

For Older Pupils. Begin by a discussion of the Epistle of James, its purpose and contents (see page 26 of this book), and then take up the abuse

against which James hurls his warnings in the lesson text. What was Paul's answer to a Philippian jailor when he asked what he must do to be saved? What did Paul mean by saying "believe the Lord Jesus Christ?" To what had Paul's faith in Jesus as the Christ led him? To what must all true faith lead? It takes only a short time to learn a principle of geometry; why must so much time be spent in applying that principle to example after example? Does the one who can repeat the rules and who believes them true but can not apply them possess geometry?

A rule applied and a rule held abstractly are two different things. So with faith. The one who abstractly holds a faith that he can not or does not work out in his life does not *possess faith.* What sort of faith is James talking about?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Faith without Works is Dead

What James teaches. It is said that Sir Walter Scott was one day being rowed across a lake by an old boatman who used oars on one of which the word *Faith* was painted and on the other the word *Works.* Naturally Scott wondered what the words meant and asked the old man. Dropping one oar the boatman rowed with the one marked Faith, and the boat went round and round in a circle; then he dropped that oar and pulled with the one marked Works with the same result; and then, as he grasped both oars and rowed steadily and the boat went straight onward he said, "Faith and Works must pull together." This is a pretty story, and seems at first thought to illustrate the meaning of James in his Epistle. The truth, however, is that faith worthy of the name, genuine belief, can not exist without works.

Into Luther's mind as he toiled up "Pilate's Stairway" at Rome on his knees, (a "work" believed of saving value) there suddenly flashed the text "The Just shall live by faith"; it came to him like a direct revelation from God that one is saved, not by ceremonials nor works, but by a vital faith, and he became the great preacher of "justification by faith." Luther believed that James meant actually to teach the doctrine of justification by works alone, and therefore he declared that the Epistle was "an epistle of straw," fit only to be burned. Ruskin seems to teach "justification by works" when he says, "What we think or what we know or what we believe is in the end of little consequence; the only thing of consequence is what we do." Ruskin is plainly speaking of a mere doctrine; a barren belief that does not lead to action, and so is James when he says, What doth it profit if a man *say* he hath faith, but have not works.

Dead Faith. Herbert Spencer's mind assented to the doctrine that recreation is necessary for health, but it was for him a barren belief; he was broken down with nervous exhaustion when he made his farewell address in the United States on "The Gospel and Recreation." So one's mind may assent to all the truths about God and Christ and the Holy Spirit, one may even be able to give a learned address on "The Gospel of the Atonement," and yet may himself have no spiritual health.

True Faith. Christ Himself demands from beginning to end of His public ministry that people believe, and seems to make everything of faith; and yet Christ declares that He only who keeps His words has built his house upon a rock, and that in the day of the great judgment it is charity that will win the prize.

The faith which is magnified in the Bible is no tepid belief, but a passionate conviction. It is the conviction that God is our Father, and has loved us from eternity, that Christ is the Saviour of the human soul and has laid down His life for us sinners. It is the conviction that Christ is able to deliver a man from his sins and to re-create him in the image of God. But it is, above all, the surrender of one's whole being into the hands of Christ and a loyal purpose of obedience unto Christ's commandments. Faith in this sense is the strongest principle in human life.

It may, of course, be argued that many good works have been produced without the principle of faith. It ought to be freely granted that many persons

who are, at least, not consciously in the communion of Jesus' spirit, and not a few who are absolutely unbelievers, have led lives of elevation and nobility. While the possibility of certain works apart from faith must be allowed, it must also be insisted that the quality of works without faith can never be compared with the quality of the works which spring from faith. Work is not to be measured by time and by quantity, by its appearance and its effect; it is ever to be estimated by its spirit. Was it the same thing that a Pharisee should tithe his mint and his anise and his cummin, and that a poor widow should throw two mites into the treasury? Is it the same thing that a man should obey the demands of the moral law for the sake of his reputation, and the opinion of his neighbor, and the comfort of his life, and the obtaining of glory, and that he should keep the same law, not in the letter but in the spirit, with an overflowing measure of obedience because it is the law of his Heavenly Father and the commandment of his Saviour? Is there anything less attractive and less effectual for high ends than cold and calculated morality? Is there anything more winsome and inspiring than self-forgetful and self-sacrificing devotion?

Could there be any more ghastly irony than a human being declaring his faith in God and refusing to keep His laws; calling himself by the name of Christ, and denying Christ's cross; accepting his fellow men as his brethren in Christ, and not doing them even a stranger's service? How can he have learned to call God Father whom he has never seen, when he does not treat his fellow man as a brother, whom he has seen? Can it be in the reason of things that an ungrateful, unloving, dishonest and unrighteous person is saved? And when we ask the question, it answers itself: Without works there is no faith; and this man is walking in a vain show, and feeding his soul with wind. Works and faith are related as the tree and the fruit;—the works are good because they are the fruit of faith, and faith is indicated by the works which it produces. Condensed from an article by *Ian Maclaren,* in *The Expositor.*

II Faith Shown by Works

Did he have Faith? During the Civil War a man manufactured what he called a bullet-proof vest. He brought it to President Lincoln and tried to interest him in providing the soldiers with such vests. "Put it on," said Lincoln, "and stand the required number of feet away and allow a man with a loaded rifle to fire at you, and if it stands the test we will consider it." He had to admit that he was not willing to do this, and he had nothing more to say.

Belief controls Conduct. Suppose a boy believes that he can not remember anything. He may have an excellent memory which only needs the right training, but that belief prevents his attempting to remember, keeps him from making any effort to train or exercise or test his memory, leads him to depend on writing down what he should charge his memory with, and soon he has in truth a poor memory. Suppose he believes that he has steady nerves and keen sight and can make a good marksman. That belief leads him to practice till he becomes, if not a noted shot, at least a very much better one than he could have been had he said to himself that he never could excel at that sport for he believed his hand would always tremble. What you believe you will tend to become.

Faith is not belief in a doctrine, but in a Person. The object of faith is not what but Who. It is significant that *faith* and *fidelity* come from the same root word. Faith in a Person means fidelity to that Person. Loyalty to Christ means obedience to Christ. If you truly repent you will bring forth works meet for repentance. If you truly believe Christ, your life will prove that you are striving to become Christlike. Faith makes a Christian, works prove a Christian. To believe on Jesus Christ is to make His life one's example, to believe that He is the Way is to seek to follow His guidance, to believe that He is the Truth is to make His words one's own possessions, to believe that He is the Light is to make the principles of His life the light by which one directs one's conduct.

The Test of Religion. The man is not a good Christian if his domestic conduct is such that when he returns to his home his wife and children feel a sense of uneasiness at his having come. The man is not a good Christian who

in his business dealings fails to remember that it is incumbent upon him to hold a higher standard than his fellows; that it is incumbent upon him, if he is a very rich man, to make it evident alike in the way he earns and the way he spends his fortune that the word of the Lord is to him a living truth and not a dead doctrine.

More and more I believe that people who possess either religious belief or aspiration after religious belief are growing to demand conduct as the ultimate test of the worth of belief. Whenever we read in newspapers that some man esteemed to be a pillar of the church has been guilty of business dishonesty, or political dishonesty, or offenses against the moral law in any shape or way, all who are members of the churches should feel a far greater disappointment than those who are not.

We must strive, each of us in his own life, so to bear ourselves as to show that we actually take to our own souls the teaching that by our fruits we shall be known; and that the corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, and that the sound tree must prove its soundness by bringing forth good fruit. The nominal Christian, the man who has attended to all the outward observances of Christianity with no matter what scrupulous care, who, nevertheless, embezzles trust funds, who is a disgrace in business, in politics, or in home life, has sinned against the light, and is more blameworthy than if he had never made profession of belief. Each of us, layman and clergyman alike, must strive in our actual conduct day by day with the people among whom we live to make them understand what we expect from Christian folk, if they are sincere in their devotion to Christianity, is the highest standard of conduct, is the actual carrying out in practical life of what they profess to receive in church, from the Bible, and from their associations with their fellow members of whatever creed. From an address by *Theodore Roosevelt.*

III Be Ye Warmed and Fed

Mere Words. The mouth is not sweetened by saying "Honey, honey," says the Arab proverb. The distant fire one can not warm at, is a Malagasy saying. These popular proverbs tell the same truth in another way that James told when he questioned, If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Such a speaker might think he was sorry for those destitute ones, might actually wish that their wants were supplied, but feeling and wish that end with mere words are valueless.

A guard on the Tuscan coast in a report of a shipwreck off the coast said: "Notwithstanding that I lent to the crew on board the ship every assistance possible by means of my speaking trumpet, I regret to say that a number of dead bodies were washed up on the shore the next morning."

Eugene Sue's Benevolences. It is said that a poorly clad woman once met Eugene Sue on the streets of Paris and begged him to help her. The great author brushed her aside and continued his walk. She followed and again stopped him. He was forced to listen a moment to her piteous appeal, but he told her coldly that her troubles did not concern him. Again she persisted and he ordered her to leave, saying angrily that he should hand her over to the police if she did not obey. "Is this really Eugene Sue, the celebrated advocate of the poor and oppressed, the man who so eloquently describes and laments in his books the hard lot of the unfortunate?" questioned the woman in another tone, dropping her suppliant manner. "Who are you?" exclaimed the astonished man. Her answer revealed that she was one of the most fashionable ladies of Paris, one to whom he had recently prated about his benevolence.

Abraham Lincoln's Sympathy. In *McClure's Magazine* a few years ago, a lady in Springfield told this incident which shows how ready Lincoln was with helpful deeds rather than words:

I was going with a little friend for my first trip alone on the railroad cars. It was an epoch of my life. I had planned for it and dreamed of it for weeks. The day came, but as the hour of the train approached, the hackman, through some neglect, failed to call for my trunk. As the minutes went on I realized,

in a panic of grief, that I should miss the train. I was standing by the gate, my hat and gloves on, sobbing as if my heart would break, when Mr. Lincoln came by.

"Why, what's the matter?" he asked, and I poured out all my story. "How big is the trunk? There's still time, if it isn't too big," and he pushed through the gate and up to the door. My mother and I took him up to my room, where my little old-fashioned trunk stood, locked and tied. "Oh, ho!" he cried. "Wipe your eyes and come on quick." And before I knew what he was going to do, he had shouldered the trunk, was down-stairs, and striding out of the yard. Down the street he went as fast as his long legs could carry him, I trotting behind, drying my tears as I went. We reached the station in time. Mr. Lincoln put me on the train, kissed me good-bye, and told me to have a good time. It was just like him.

A Doer of Deeds. Dr. Grenfell was inspired to make his religion "practical," to devote his life to the service of others, by words spoken by the great evangelist, D. L. Moody. Shortly before the latter's death, Dr. Grenfell thanked him for that sermon. "And what have you been doing since? What have you been doing since?" was Mr. Moody's prompt question, for he always wanted deeds, not words. This Oxford man has been doing great deeds since; he is the promoter of industry, the physician, missionary, magistrate, and helpful friend of every fisherman on the Labrador coast.

Mr. Norman Duncan describes his work thus in "Dr. Grenfell's Parish." "In the little hospital-ship, Strathcona, the doctor darts here and there and everywhere, all summer long, responding to calls, searching out the sick, gathering patients for the various hospitals. The ship is known to every harbor on the coast; and she is often overcrowded with the sick. In the fall when navigation closes, she must go into winter quarters, and then the sick and starving are sought out by dog-team and komatik. There is no cessation of beneficent activity; there is merely a change in the manner of getting about. Summer journeys are hard enough, but winter travel is a matter of much greater difficulty and hardship. The mission-doctor finds greater delight, if anything, in the wild, swift race over rotten or heaving ice, or in a night in the driving snow, than in running the Strathcona through a nor'east gale. The journey northward in midwinter is made alone with the dogs. Many a night the doctor must get into his sleeping bag and make himself as comfortable as possible in the snow, snuggling close to the dogs for the sake of the warmth of their bodies. Six hundred miles north in the dead of winter, six hundred miles back again; it takes a man of unchangeable devotion to undertake it!"

SENTENCE SERMONS

It is true of men and watches—
You may tell them by their works. *Pittsburg Bulletin.*

Say thou thy say and I will do my deed. *Tennyson.*

Words are good when works follow. *German Saying.*

Faith alone justifies, but not the faith which is alone. *F. W. Robertson.*

The truths that are not translated into lives are dead truths. *Woodrow Wilson.*

The living force in any man's creed is not what he has traditionally accepted, but what he has made part of his daily life. *M. D. Babcock.*

A godly talk does not always imply a godly walk. *A. T. Pierson.*

A religion that never gets beyond the brain bears no relation to the loving, compassionate Saviour. *Charles W. Fowler.*

Conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless till it converts itself into conduct. *Carlyle.*

Not he that repeateth the name,
But he that doeth the will. *Longfellow.*

A belief which is not incorporated into life, into conduct, is either insincere, or else it lacks significance, a mere cobweb, a will-o'-the-wisp, a speculation without dignity or worth. *C. Hanford Henderson.*

Prayer and missionaries are as inseparable as faith and works. *John R. Mott.*

To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. Jas. 4.17.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Beware of false prophets; by their fruits ye shall know them, said Jesus. Beware of false faith, by its fruits ye shall know it, is the meaning of our lesson. A belief that is not incorporated into conduct may be lightly held and insincere, or it may be firmly held and merely doctrinal—both are equally futile. What does your faith in Jesus the Christ do? If it makes you strive to obey Him, to be like Him, your faith is genuine.

Flatter not thyself in thy faith to God if thou wantest charity for thy neighbor, says a quaint old writer, and think not thou hast charity for thy neighbor if thou wantest faith to God.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

What is the use, my friends, of claiming to have faith if your lives do not show that you have it? Can such so-called faith save you? If some one is in need of clothing and food, can any good come from your saying to him, Be warmed and fed, if you do nothing about it? Just as charity that consists of words without deeds is a dead charity, so faith that does not lead to good works is a dead faith. You may claim to have faith, but you can not prove it without works, while the works of another prove that he has faith. You admit that God is one, and that is well, but demons, too, admit this and shudder, for such an intellectual faith does not save them. Are you willing to be instructed in the truth that faith which does not lead to works is a barren faith? Take the example of Abraham: he was willing to sacrifice Isaac, his son, in obedience to the God whom he believed; you see that his faith was perfected in his works and was not barren, so that in him the scripture was fulfilled that declared "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God." You see that works which prove a man's genuine faith, not faith that is a mere assent of the intellect, set men right with God. And take another example, that of Rahab who received the messengers and aided their escape from Jericho, did not her act, which was a fruit of her faith in God of Israel, make her pleasing in His sight since her life was spared when the inhabitants of Jericho perished? As the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead, for works are the evidences of a vital faith.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. There is an atheism which still repeats the Creed. *Bishop Brooks.*
2. Paul's teachings and James' teachings in regard to faith.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Commit to memory the entire lesson. 2. What light is thrown on the first verse by Rom. 2.21, 23 and 1 Tim. 1.7? 3. With verse 6 Compare Matt. 15.18. 4. What verse in the first chapter of Genesis is recalled by verse 9? (26). 5. Write out these verses in regard to the duty of bridling the tongue, and commit four of them to memory: Psa. 39.1; Prov. 4.24; 10.10, 19; 14.23; 15.4; 17.20; 18.6; Eccl. 3.7; 10.12; Matt. 5.22; 12.36; Eph. 4.29; 5.4; Col. 3.8; 4.6; 1 Thess. 5.11; Tit. 1.10; 2.8; 3.2; Jas. 1.26; 1 Pet. 3.10; Jude 16.

LESSON X—JUNE 6

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

Read James 3.1-12. Commit verses 8-10.

Golden Text

Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles. Prov. 21.23.

LESSON TEXT James 3.1-12

1 Be not many *of you* teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment. 2 For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. 3 Not if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also. 4 Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willeth. 5 So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by mankind: 8 but the tongue can no man tame; *it is* a restless evil, *it is* full of deadly poison. 9 Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God: 10 out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet *water* and bitter? 12 can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither *can* salt water yield sweet.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Be not many of you teachers.* See Matt. 23.8; Rom. 2.21, 23; 1 Tim. 1.7.

2. *Stumble.* Actions are steps in life's way; wrong actions are missteps that cause stumbling.—*The same is a perfect man.* Perfect, entire. "It is only an entirely perfect man who does not err even in a single word" (*Weiss*).—*Able to bridle the whole body also.* "This is the doctrine that self-control in one respect carries with it complete self-control—probably a half truth" (*Cone*).

3, 4. Illustrations of the last statement of v. 2.

5. *Boasteth great things.* See Psa. 12.3, 4.

6. *The world of iniquity.* The sum total of evil.—*Which defileth the whole body.* See Matt. 15.18. "It is so easy for a word-sin to end in a sin of action; because a sin, to which we yield so far as to permit it to obtain control over the tongue, easily gains the mastery" (*Weiss*).—*The wheel of nature.* "The present life of man is compared to a wheel which is put in motion at birth, and runs swiftly until death stops it. The tongue often sets the wheel on flame, which sometimes sets on fire the whole machine" (*Benson*).—*Is set on fire by hell.* It is interesting to note that our word *devil* comes from the Greek word διάβολος, which means the slanderer.

8. *Full of deadly poison.* Psa. 140.3; Rom. 3.13.

9. *Made after the likeness of God.* Gen. 1.26.

11, 12. These verses emphasize the statement in verse 10, *These things ought not so to be.* There is no such inconsistency in Nature as in man.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1. *We shall receive heavier judgment.* The more thou knowest, and the better thou understandest, the more strictly shalt thou be judged, unless thy life be also the more holy. *Thomas à Kempis.*

5. *The tongue is a little member.* Don't say, What can a word do? It takes so little to help a soul.

Don't say, It was only a word. It takes so little to hurt a soul.

To block the wagon going down hill, to prop the wagon going up, needs only a pebble. *Charles Wagner,* in *The Better Way.*

6. *The Tongue is a fire.* As coals are to hot embers, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to inflame strife. Prov. 26.21.

6. *The tongue defileth the whole body.* Guard thy speech before all things, for a man's ruin lies in his tongue. From an *Egyptian Papyrus,* about 4000 B. C.

8. *The tongue can no man tame.* You can not arrest a calumnious tongue, you can not arrest the calumny itself; you may refute the slanderer, you may trace home a slander to its source, you may expose the author of it, you may by that exposure give a lesson so severe as to make a repetition of the offense appear impossible; but the fatal habit is incorrigible; to-morrow the tongue is at work again.

Neither can you stop the consequences of slander; you may publicly prove its falsehood, you may sift every atom, explain and annihilate it, and yet, years after you thought that everything had been disposed of for ever, the mention of your name wakes up associations in the mind of some one who heard the calumny, but never heard or never attended to the refutation, or who has only a vague and confused recollection of the whole, and he asks doubtfully, "But was there not some suspicious circumstance connected with him?"

It is like the Greek fire used in ancient warfare, which burnt unquenched beneath the water, or, to use the metaphor of James himself, it is like the wheel that catches fire as it goes, and burns with a fiercer conflagration as its own speed increases. You may tame the wild beast, the conflagration of the American forest will cease when all the timber and the dry underwood is consumed; but you can not arrest the progress of that cruel wood word which you uttered carelessly yesterday or this morning. *F. W. Robertson,* in *Sermons.*

8. *The tongue is full of deadly poison.* The story of the bees in this described by Mr. F. A. Root in his work "Bee Culture": "After a bee has stung you and torn itself away from the sting, you will notice, if you look closely, a bundle of muscles near by, partly enveloping the poison bag. Well, the curious part of it is that, for some considerable time after the sting has been detached from the body of the bee, these muscles will work with a kind of pumping motion, working the sting farther into the wound, as if they had a conscious existence and burned with a desire to wreak vengeance on the party attacked." Words have a life of their own. Many a harsh word, many a vicious lie, many a scandal from a gossip's tongue has thus worked its "sting farther into the wound" and continued to ply its poison, even after its author has forgotten, and sometimes after the grave has closed over him. And like the bee's sting, the lie or the scandal can not be drawn back after it has been flung at a fellow mortal. *Homiletic Review.*

10. *These things ought not so to be. Ought not,* that is, they are unnatural. That this is James' meaning is evident from the two illustrations which follow: Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? Can a fig tree yield olives, or a vine figs? There is apparently in these metaphors little that affords an argument against slander; the motive which they suggest would appear to many far-fetched and of small cogency; but to one who looks on this world as a vast whole, and who has recognized the moral law as only a part of the great law of the universe, harmoniously blending with the whole, illustrations such as these are the most powerful of arguments. The truest definition of evil is that which represents it as something contrary to nature: evil is evil because it is unnatural; a vine which should bear olive berries, an eye to which blue seems yellow, would be diseased; an unnatural mother, an unnatural son, an unnatural act, are the strongest terms of condemnation. It is this view which Christianity gives of moral evil: the teaching of Christ was the recall of men to nature, not an infusion of something new into

humanity. Christ came to call out all the principles and powers of human nature, to restore the natural equilibrium of all our faculties. Now the nature of men is to adore God and to love what is God-like in man. The office of the tongue is to bless. Slander is guilty because it contradicts this. *F. W. Robertson,* in *Sermons Preached at Brighton.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Be not many of you teachers.* An assumption of the office and authority of teachers was very prevalent among the Jews. The Pharisees loved to be called of all men "Rabbi, Rabbi" (Matt. 23.8). St. Paul, adverting to the Jews, says that they were confident of their ability to be guides to the blind and teachers of the foolish (Rom. 2.19, 20); and he finds fault with them for desiring to be teachers of the law, whilst at the same time they understand neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed (1 Tim. 1.7). This craving to be teachers would naturally be carried by the converted Jews into the Christian church. The opportunity of exercising the office of teachers was greater in these days of early Christianity than in ours, as it would seem that teaching was not then restricted to a certain class, but was exercised by believers generally. *Philip Schaff.*

In Palestine of the first century there was no lack of religious teaching. The scribe was a familiar figure in Galilee as well as in Judea; he was to be met everywhere, in the synagogue, in the market-place, in the houses of the rich. With him went a numerous following of attached scholars. The first business of the Rabbi was to "raise up many disciples," and the first care of the good Jew to "make to himself a master." It is not without a bitter reminiscence of the religious condition of Palestine that James of Jerusalem counsels the members of the Christian countries to which he wrote. *H. B. Surti,* in *The Expositor.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Two weeks ago we studied James' words to the Hebrew Christians in regard to the duty of proving their faith by their works. The next evils against which he hurls his forcible words are the sins of the tongue.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils.

You may keep your feet from slipping,
And your hands from evil deeds,
But to guard your tongue from tripping,
What unceasing care it needs!
Be you old or be you young,
O, beware,
Take good care,
Of the tittle-tattle, tell-tale tongue!

This stanza taken from *Saint Nicholas* is the thought of James in his letter written more than eighteen hundred years ago. In many things we all stumble, he says, only a perfect man keeps always from stumbling or tripping with his tongue.

For Older Pupils. The Epistle of James is the most intensely practical book in the Bible. It consists mainly of a series of most vigorous warnings against vices and errors to which the Hebrew Christians were especially liable, couched in language at times somewhat extravagant. Extravagant seem the words of the second verse: If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. But would he not be a perfect man who never uttered an angry or unkind or thoughtless word? Out of the heart the mouth speaketh. The tongue is a fire; continues James, the world of iniquity among our members, which defileth the whole body. When Frederick William IV of Germany was raging one day over a servant's neglect, Queen Elizabeth stood still and loked around the room where they were until he asked what she was looking for. "I am looking for the King," she answered quietly. The King was silenced, for he realized that he had been acting in an

unkingly manner. Is not he who allows himself to be overmastered by angry passion "set on fire," his whole body defiled, his true self lost?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Sins of the Tongue

Angry Words. The secret of a long life is in never losing your temper, Bancroft the historian was wont to proclaim. Vigorous as he was at the age of ninety, he had a right to his opinion. Modern science has shown that one's mental moods have a great effect on one's health, that violent anger may actually produce disease and thus shorten life. It sets on fire the wheel of nature.

Idle Words. Usually they that speak much, speak much amiss; and among many words there can not but be many idle words, which they must shortly give an account of. They that love to hear themselves talk do not consider what work they are making for repentance. *Matthew Henry.*

Unkind Words. "Kind words can never die" we used to sing; equally true is it that unkind words can never die. When Gladstone, Tennyson, Manning, and other noted men were nearing the close of their life, Colonel Gourrand asked them to speak into the phonograph some message for the world after their death. Cardinal Manning's message was this: "I hope that no word of mine, written or spoken in my life, will be found to have done harm to my fellow-men when I am dead." If every one but kept this gracious thought in mind, and often asked himself what the influence of his words will be, not only at the present moment, but when recalled to memory by and by, what a different world we should live in! We should be quite ready to agree with James that a murderous tongue is the world of iniquity among our members could we but see what changes a consecrated tongue in every one would make. Words are like that floating mine which drifted out to sea during the Russo-Japanese war and was forgotten till it struck the west coast of Japan and exploded, killing ten and wounding over one hundred and fifty; they may be forgotten, but their power to work ill is not destroyed and all unexpectedly they may work unintended havoc.

> O, many a shaft at random sent,
> Finds mark the archer little meant;
> And many a word, at random spoken,
> May soothe or wound a heart that's broken,

sings Thomas Moore in "The Lord of the Isles."

In "Farm Festivals" Will Carleton has shown how words lightly spoken may not be lightly forgotten. The farmer had spoken quick, thoughtless words to his wife. She had been nobly trying to do her best on the little farm, and he accused her of carelessness.

> That speech—it hadn't been gone half a minute
> Before I saw the cold black poison in it;
> And I'd have given all I had, and more,
> To've only safely got it back in-door.
> I'm now what most folks "well-to-do" would call.
> I feel to-day as if I'd give it all,
> Provided I through fifty years might reach,
> And kill and bury that half-minute speech.
> Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds,
> You can't do that way when you're flying words.
> Careful with fire—is good advice we know:
> Careful with words—is ten times doubly so.
> Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead;
> But God Himself can't kill them when they're said.

Slanderous Words. Oft repeated but very apt is the story of the object lesson given by Philip Neri to the woman who confessed that she had been spreading slanderous reports. "Go to the market and buy a chicken, and pluck out its feathers and throw them away as you return with it to me." She obeyed. "Now go back, and bring me all the feathers you have scattered," was his next direction. "But that is impossible," she said, "the wind has carried

them away, how can I recover them?" "Just like your words of slander," he returned, "they have been carried about in every direction and you cannot recall them. Go and slander no more."

The Duchess of Fife has a scrap book of newspaper clippings labeled "Things we never did." There is scarcely any one in public life who is not made to suffer at some time or other from murderous tongues. Horace Greeley died of a broken heart caused by malicious slanders, said Senator Depew. "I made a speech with Mr. Greeley in his presidential campaign, just before its close. We spoke from the same platform, and both of us knew that he was to be beaten. We went back to his home, and he was jeered upon the train and at the depot when he arrived. We went into his study, which was littered with those famous caricatures of Nast, representing him as the embodiment of all that was evil or vile in expression or practice in life. Mr. Greeley glanced them over for a moment, and then said:

"My life is a failure. I never sought to accumulate a fortune. I never have cared for fame, but I did want to leave a monument of what I had done for my fellow-men, in lifting them up and in doing away with the curse of slavery and the curse of rum; but here I am, at the close of this campaign, so represented to my countrymen that the slave will always look upon me as having been one of his owners, and reform will look upon me as a fraud."

Then, his head falling upon his desk, he broke into uncontrollable sobs. I sent for his family. The brain that had done such splendid work snapped. The next morning he was taken to an asylum, where he died. His heart literally broke."

Senator Hanna was represented by political opponents as a coarse, sordid, unfeeling rich man, but after his death it was proved that he was invariably kind and just to those whom he employed, a true friend to the poor, a man whose word was true, one who was ready to make any sacrifice for the cause of right and justice.

When severe charges were made against General Sir Hector Macdonald of the British Army he took his own life. A commission appointed to investigate the charges found them utterly false and declared: "We find the late Sir Hector Macdonald had been cruelly assassinated by vile and slanderous tongues."

Governor Pennypacker of Pennsylvania once suggested that "there should be liability in damages for the physical and mental suffering caused by publications made without 'reasonable care.'" Surely a Christian will exercise more than what might pass for "reasonable care" in this matter; he will remember that love taketh not account of evil, rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, thinketh no evil, much less repeateth no evil.

Profane Words. Swearing is not only sinful but senseless. Is anything gained by swearing?

George Francis Train was once much amazed while traveling in a parlor car by the oaths that were uttered. He joined in the conversation, and exclaimed at intervals, "Shovel, tongs and poker!" "Mr. Train, why do you use that nonsensical phrase?" at last questioned one of the men. "That is my way of swearing," answered Train, "and it is no more nonsensical and far less blasphemous than your oaths. I'll quit if you will." There was no more swearing during that journey.

Swearing is a sign either of coarseness and visciousness or of weakness. It is not God who is hurt by the swearing, but the man who utters the oaths. A man who swears "to make his statements emphatic," or because swearing has become such a habit that he "swears without knowing it," is essentially a weak man.

"The Indian language has no swear words in it," proudly remarked a student at Hampton, "and if an Indian swears he has to do it in the language of civilization."

"Unless something is done to check the evil, Americans must soon become known as the most four-mouthed persons on earth," one of our newspaper editors affirms. Is he right?

Unspoken Words. Shall we class unspoken words among the evils of the tongue? Surely the tongue is responsible for what it fails to do as well as for what it does, for its evils of omission as well as its evils of commission.

The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung!

says Edward Rowland Sill, and then he continues,

The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung!

We may bear false-witness by our silence as well as by our speech, we may hurt others by withholding the just word of praise as well as by uttering the unjust word of criticism, we may sin in not speaking the kind word of encouragement as well as in voicing the unkind word of discouragement.

II The Virtues of the Tongue

Charitable Words. Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing, says James. This truth is shown by an object lesson which Aesop is said to have taught his master, the heathen philosopher Xanthus. Xanthus had ordered Aesop to provide the best things he could obtain in the market for a coming guest. When the meal was served, each course consisted of tongue, though the sauces were different. Xanthus was very angry and exclaimed to his servant, "Did I not order you to buy the best victuals in the market?"

"And have I not obeyed your order?" returned Aesop. "Is there anything better than tongue? Is not the tongue the bond of civil society, the organ of truth and reason, and the instrument of our praise and adoration to God?"

For the morrow Xanthus ordered the worst things in the market to be provided. Aesop ordered tongues. "What! tongues again?" cried Xanthus. "Most certainly," answered Aesop; "the tongue is surely the worst thing in the world. It is the instrument of all strife and contention, the inventor of lawsuits, and the source of division and wars: it is the organ of error, of lies, of calamity, and of blasphemies."

My brethren, said James, these things ought not so to be. The tongue that can speak blessings should never be used for cursings.

Peter the Great once stopped criticism of another man's character by saying to the speaker: "At any rate the man of whom you speak has also his good qualities. Tell them to me, whatever you know about them. It is not difficult to throw mud over another, but I would rather help every one to keep his coat clean." The tendency to criticise or repeat words of slander is best overcome by cultivating a habit of hearty and charitable speech. As Amiel says, the cricket is not the nightingale; why tell him so? Throw yourself into the mind of the cricket—the process is newer and more ingenious, and it is what charity commands. Where we can not help, let us keep silent about the weaknesses of others, and seek by our words to accomplish what the Good Samaritan did with his oil and wine. Paul's letters to the Churches he founded have many words of good cheer and commendation; let us learn their lesson.

Sympathetic Words. If I can feel sympathy,—feel it within and without,—then the dew falls and the desert begins to blossom. By sympathy I do not mean merely a fellowship in sorrow, but also, and no less truly, a fellowship in joy—a feeling for which we ought to have an English word. To be glad when your brother men are prosperous and happy, to rejoice in their success, to cheer for their victories; to be compassionate and pitiful when your brother men are distressed and miserable, to grieve over their failures, to help them in their troubles,—this is the fraternal spirit which blesses him who exercises it, and those toward whom it is exercised. *Henry van Dyke.*

Touch Your Lips with Gladness.

Are you growing weary of the long and rugged road,
Weary of the burden, O my brothers?
Men have found the surest way for lightening the load,
Is just to try to lighten it for others.
Hearts still hold the most of love that most their love bestow
On lonely lives of those who are forlorning;
Roll the stone from out the path where tired feet must go,
And touch your lips with gladness every morning.
Touch your lips with gladness, and go singing on your way,
Smiles will strangely lighten every duty;

Just a little word of cheer may span a sky of gray
With hope's own heaven-tinted bow of beauty.
Wear a pleasant face wherein shall shine a joyful heart
As shines the sun, the happy fields adorning;
To every care-beclouded life some ray of light impart
And touch your lips with gladness every morning.

Nixon Waterman, in *Success.*

The Stewardship of Speech. Men become self-centered and therefore blinded. They see their own desires, but they do not recognize their brother's rights. They see their possessions; they do not recognize the responsibility of possession. "Our lips are our own, who is lord over us?" How much more beautiful it were to say, "My lips are my own, but for the service of my brother. What can I say to help him? What message can I take to comfort him? What song can I sing to cheer him?" *J. H. Jowett,* in *Brooks by the Way.*

III How Much Wood is kindled by how Small a Fire

The Little Member. "The only way to fight a big fire is to put it out while it is still a comparatively small fire," says the Fire Commissioner of New York. "The only safe way to handle a big fire is never to give it a chance to get big. Kill it while it is young. That accounts for the number of third alarm calls. It is a great deal better to call out eight companies and send all but two back than to call two and find you need eight." Is not this equally good counsel for the treatment of little sins?

The rudder is very small compared with the ship which it turns about at the will of the steersman, so the tongue is a very small member compared with the rest of the body and yet it is responsible for great results according to the way in which it is directed by its steersman. A railway switch is a small thing as compared to the whole track, but its turning means safety or destruction to the train bearing down upon it.

Up on the mountain summit in Switzerland a small ball of snow becomes loosened and starts slowly downward, growing as it rolls, hastening its speed as it grows, tearing with it huge masses of snow and ice, until at last it hurls itself thundering upon the peaceful village down in the valley and houses and people are buried beneath a mighty avalanche. The cause of all the loss of life and property is—a snowball! Is not this a picture of the growth of sin? At first the little lie, the little slander, the little fit of anger, the little departure from the perfect uprightness,—how small and inconsequential each seems. No one notices it at first, but, like the circle which is sent out by a small stone hurled into the quiet waters of a pond, it becomes ever greater and greater as it advances. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire!

How Slander begins and grows. Beaumarchais, in his comedy of the "Barber of Seville," thus describes how small a matter a little slander is at the beginning and how great a fire it can kindle. "First a little humming sound, skimming the ground, like a swallow before a storm, *pianissimo, pianissimo,* murmuring and buzzing and spreading the poison as it goes. A breath catches it up; *piano, piano,* it glides into your ear adroitly. The harm is done; it takes root; it climbs, it travels, and *rinforzando* it travels from mouth to mouth like the devil. Then all at once, you hardly know how, you see it raising its head, hissing, swelling itself out, growing monstrous under your very eyes. It rises, takes its flight, whirls around you, clutches you, drags you along, bursts forth and thunders, and becomes, Heaven help us, a general shriek, *crescendo*—a universal chorus of hatred and proscription."

The Beginning of Thieving. This is the beginning in the great Parisian shops. From a gallery one sees a woman—rich or well-to-do—who buys a certain number of objects and pays for them; but without asking permission she takes some little, almost insignificant, object—a little ribbon to fasten a parcel, a more commodious paper bag. No one will say she is stealing; no one will think of speaking to her or disturbing her. But she is observed, and even watched; for one expects to see her again some time after, taking, as she walks along, say, a flower worth twenty-five centimes. A little later she will take an article of greater value, and then will take for the pleasure of taking. *M. Joly.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

A golden tongue is in the mouth of the blessed. *Welsh Proverb.*

Put a seal upon your mouth and guard your heart with the same vigilance as the ramparts of a city. *Chinese Saying.*

The tongue that pleasant things will say
Through the wide world can make its way. *Welsh Saying.*

Speak, that I may know thee. *Socrates.*

To-day no hasty word shall slip
Over the threshold of my lip. *Robert Loveman.*

It's a gude heart that says nae ill, but a better that thinks nane. *Scotch Saying.*

Govern the lips
As they were palace doors, the King within. *Arnold.*

By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Matt. 12.37.

If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. Jas. 1.26.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Every word of the lesson has its present-day meaning. Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, says James in the nineteenth verse of the first chapter of his Epistle, and in the third chapter he brings this advice again to his readers in vigorous language. Let not many of you who need to learn be anxious to be teachers of others, he writes, for of us who teach more is required and to us greater judgment is meted. For in many things we all err. He that never errs in speech is a perfect man, having his whole self in control. For the tongue is to man what the bridle bit is to the horse or the rudder to the ship; with the bridle we turn the horse, and with the rudder the steersman turns wherever he will the great ships which are driven by rough winds. The tongue, like the bit and the rudder, is a small member of the whole, and yet it boasts great things. A small fire can kindle a vast forest, and the tongue is a fire, the sum total of evil among our members, capable of defiling the whole man, of setting on fire the wheel of nature, and it is itself set on fire by hell. Every kind of beast and bird and reptile can be and has been tamed by man, but not the tongue; it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father and with it we curse men who are made in the likeness of God, both blessing and cursing coming from the same mouth. My brothers, these things ought not so to be, any more than both sweet and bitter water ought to come from the same fountain, or olives from a fig tree, or figs from a vine, or sweet water from salt.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Epistle of James.
2. The teacher's responsibility.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What is a hero? 2. What is a hero of faith? 3. What Bible character is your hero of faith? Why? 4. Tell the story of the creation as given in Genesis. 5. What does Paul say about Abraham's faith in the fourth chapter of Romans? 6. How do you understand the blessings given by Isaac and by Jacob to be instances of faith? 7. What was Joseph's charge concerning his bones, and how was it carried out? (Gen. 50.24-26; Ex. 13.19; Josh. 24.32.) 8. With each hero mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews give the Old Testament references to which that chapter refers. (See the marginal references.)

LESSON XI—JUNE 13

HEROES OF FAITH

Read Hebrews 11.1-40. Commit verses 24, 25.

Golden Text

Faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. Heb. 11.1.

LESSON TEXT Hebrews 11.1-3, 17-29

1 Now faith is assurance of *things* hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.
2 For therein the elders had witness borne to them. 3 By faith we understand
that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen
hath not been made out of things which appear....
17 By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly
received the promises was offering up his only begotten *son;* 18 *even he* to whom
it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 accounting that God *is* able to
raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him
back. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come.
21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and
worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when his
end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and
gave commandment concerning his bones. 23 By faith Moses, when he was
born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly
child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. 24 By faith Moses,
when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
25 choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy
the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 accounting the reproach of Christ greater
riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of re-
ward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for
he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the passover,
and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not
touch them. 29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land:
which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Assurance of.* Margin, *the giving substance to.* The Greek word, ὑπόστασις, translated *substance* in the A. V. and *assurance* in the R. V., means literally *a standing under, that which is a foundation for something to stand on.*—*Conviction.* Margin, *test.*

2, 3. *The elders.* The forefathers of the Jews, the heroes of the Old Testament.—Verse 3. The creation of the world by God, as told in the first chapter of Genesis.

17, 18. *Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac.* See James 2.21; Gen. 22.1-9.—*Even he to whom it was said.* Abraham was tried, not only by having to choose between obedience to God and love for his son, but by having such contradictory revelations, the promise of great posterity and the command to offer his son in sacrifice.—*In Isaac shall thy seed be called.* Gen. 21.12.

19. *Accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead.* "The original promise Abraham thoroughly believed, and he looked to its realization through God's power. This was a complicated and brilliant act of faith. Faith in God's first promise and faith in God as power made faith in the new command and obedience to it possible" (*Davidson*).—*In a figure.* Figuratively,

not literally, he received Isaac back from the dead, for in his mind he had given him up as dead.

20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.* Isaac wished to give the highest blessing to Esau, but his faith led him to accept the divine overruling of his purpose. See Gen. 27.1-40, especially v. 33.—*Even concerning things to come.* The words of Isaac's blessing referred to the distant future.

21. *By faith Jacob blessed each of the sons of Joseph.* Gen. 48.1, 5, 16, 20. To Joseph's sons he gave the double portion of the divine inheritance which would naturally belong to the oldest son.

22. *Gave commandment concerning his bones.* Gen. 50.24-26; Ex. 13.19; Josh. 24.32.

23. *By faith Moses was hid three months.* "Faith under two forms moved the parents of Moses to preserve him. Something in his appearance kindled hope as to his destiny; and in looking to God for the fulfilment of his promise they had no fear of the king's orders" (*Westcott*). See Ex. 1.16-22; 2.2.

24, 25. *When he was grown up.* Ex. 2.11-15.—*Than to enjoy the pleasures of sin.* "Moses was called to devote himself to his people. He knew the source of his call: to have disobeyed it, therefore, by seeking to retain his place in the Egyptian court would have been sin" (*Westcott*).

26. *The reproach of Christ.* "The passage seems to say, not only that the reproach was the same as that of Christ, but that Moses suffered it having Him in his view. How precise his knowledge is considered by the author to have been, can not be decided with certainty; at least, his mind, filled with the promises, was directed to the future, that future which has now become historically realized. On the terms compare Psa. 89.50, 51." (*Davidson*).—*Recompense of reward.* See verse 6; Heb. 2.2; 1 Cor. 2.9.

27. *He forsook Egypt.* Ex. 12.50, 51; 13.17-22.—*The wrath of the king.* Ex. 10.28.—*He endured as seeing him who is invisible.* Num. 12.7, 8.

28. *He kept the passover.* Ex. 12.21-28.—*The destroyer of the first-born.* Ex. 12.23, 29.

29. *By faith they.* "The faith of the people met the faith of the leader. Compare Psa. 106.9; 114.5; Is. 43.16; 51.10" (*Westcott*).—*Passed through the Red Sea.* Ex. 14.22-29.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,* King James' Version.

> Faith of things hoped is substance, and the proof
> Of things not seen; and herein doth consist
> Methinks its essence.—"Rightly hast thou deemed,"
> Was answered, "If thou well discern, why first
> He hath defined its substance, and then proof." *Dante.*

2. *For therein the elders had witness borne to them.* The actions which are recorded are those actions in a man's life of which faith is the motive. Joseph was a king's chief minister, yet little is told us of the services he rendered to the state, and here reference is made only to that which was in his life the outcome of his faith in God's word. "Therein"—in respect to their faith—the men of old had witness borne to them. The Bible contains the history, the sayings, the songs of *faithful* men. It is the book of men's faith. For the two must go together and together they make religion.

This latter truth is the one which is emphasized and illustrated in this eleventh chapter. The writer's assertion that the various achievements mentioned in the chapter were accomplished by faith, seems in some instances somewhat daring, and at first appears almost an unwarranted assumption.

That the fully developed faith of the New Testament is meant is, of course, impossible. The faith of chapter 11 must be taken in a broader sense, the essence of the faith, however, consisting in the making of the effort. God reveals Himself and speaks His promises, but man must do his part. It may take the outward form of a sacrifice, of the building of an ark, of the offering up of an only child, or of the saving of the little one from death by love's wise plan. But however much it may vary in form and in practice, in spirit it is the same in every case. It is an effort on man's part by which he turns to God. It is,

as it were, a going forth to meet God half way. The lives of the heroes of chapter 11 were full of *active* faith. It was just this feature of faith which needed emphasis for the Hebrew readers of this letter; they lacked the strenuous effort of the man of faith, in his response to God. They needed to learn how the contents of their sacred Scriptures were determined by the presence or absence of this faith: how without such faith religion could not be, God's promises would not be, things hoped for would not be, things unseen would be things unknown. *A. T. Burbridge,* in *Biblical World.*

26. *Greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.*

Not for a soul like thine the calm
Of selfish ease and joys of sense;
But duty, more than crown of palm,
Its own exceeding recompense. *Whittier.*

26. *The recompense of reward.* He who believes in a future life is a citizen of two worlds. He moves in this, but his highest thought and inspiration are fixed on the future. To such a person, what takes place here and now is not unimportant, but it is infinitely less important than what shall take place hereafter. He looks upon his life here as but a preparation for the life to come. His experiences here, whether of joy, or of sorrow, are of value to him only as they enable him the better to meet the everlasting demands of the life after death. He is not indifferent to the rewards which may come in this world to industry, endeavor and opportunity, but failure, illness, poverty, abuse—what do these amount to, to a man who believes he is to enjoy the sublime privileges of eternity? He measures everything by the infinite. Wealth, luxury, power, distinction—he may not despise these, but he looks upon them as being but temporary, mere delights given as tests of his character. *Wall Street Journal.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

21. *Jacob worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.* It appears that at the time Joseph visited his father, he was very weak, and generally confined to his couch, having at hand his staff, either that with which he usually supported his feeble body, or that which was the ensign of his office, as patriarch or chief of a very numerous family. The ancient chiefs in all countries had this staff or sceptre always at hand. When Joseph sware to him that he should be carried up from Egypt; he bowed himself on his bed's head (Gen. 48.2), still supporting himself with his staff. It was therefore indifferent to say, that he worshipped or bowed himself on his staff, or on his bed's head. But as the Hebrew word *shatach* signifies not only to bow, but also to worship, because acts of adoration were performed by bowing and prostration; and as *mittah,* a bed, by the change of the vowel points, becomes *match,* a staff, the Septuagint translates the passage, And Israel bowed, or worshipped on the head of his staff. This reading is followed literatim in Hebrews. *Adam Clarke.*

26. *The reproach of Christ.* There seems an anachronism in this expression. But it is chosen purposely. The ancient Jewish teachers spoke of the pangs and sorrows of Messiah, and divided them into three—those which he would suffer himself, those which would be endured by his people before and by his people after the advent. Thus as the apostle speaks of filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his body for his body's sake, Moses by faith beheld in Israel's sufferings, and those that awaited him, the reproach of the true Israel, Israel's glory and hope, the Messiah. Compare 1 Cor. 10.4; 1 Peter 1.10. The New Testament counterpart may be seen in 1 Peter 4.13; Phil. 3.10; Col. 2.24; 2 Tim. 3.12. *Adolph Saphir,* the *Epistle to the Hebrews.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

See "The Epistle to the Hebrews" p. 25 of this book. Paul often preached against relying on legalism, the keeping of the Jewish law, instead of on faith in Jesus the Christ; James, in the words which we studied two weeks ago, preached against the danger of relying on an intellectual faith, a mere assent to doctrine, that did not prove its genuineness by producing fruit in one's life; and the writer to the Hebrews in this eleventh chapter preaches against

the danger of not having any faith. He is inculcating the duty of faith by recalling the great heroes of faith in Israel's glorious past, and holding them up as noble examples; as great as was their faith in the old dispensation, must be the faith of the Hebrews in the new, for without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. A doctor and a merchant had been having a serious talk one day, and the doctor asked his friend "What is faith?" The merchant did not answer, but called to him his eight-year-old son who was having a fine time playing with some tin soldiers. "Karl," he said, "pack up your soldiers as quickly as you can and go to bed. I think it is better that you should do so." The boy was astonished at so strange an order, and grieved at leaving his new toys, but after giving his father a long, beseeching look and seeing that his father was determined, he pressed back his tears, said not a word, but gave him a warm kiss and hurried away. "There, Doctor, that is faith," said the father. Then he called the boy back and whispered into his ear, "And when you bring me another school certificate as good as the last, I will take you on a visit to Hamburg when vacation comes." The boy shouted for joy, and for a long time they still heard from his bedroom his jubilant cries. "There, Doctor, that was faith," again said the merchant. "That boy has the stuff in him to be a man of faith. If he acts toward God as he acted toward me, as trustfully and as obediently, he will have faith." "I think I understand the matter better now than I would have done from a sermon," answered his friend.

This is the story which Dr. Martin Luther gives in His "Little Catechisms" as a definition of faith, and it is a fine illustration of the way in which the writer of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews defined it, too. He begins by saying that faith is assurance of things hoped for, and then gives a long list of men and women who showed by their lives that they had such faith. Karl had assurance of things hoped for, he was sure of the hoped-for visit to Hamburg because he had faith in his father's promises. He could not understand why he should give up his play and go to bed in the daytime, but he had perfect faith in his father's wisdom and he obeyed without a murmur. So, too, these Old Testament heroes of faith had faith in their heavenly Father's promises, and obeyed His commands even though they could not understand why they were given.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Faith is Assurance of Things Hoped For

Faith and Life. When you lie down to sleep, whether or not you think to offer up to the good Father a prayer of thanksgiving for the mercies of the day and a petition for protection through the shadows of the night, you close your eyes in faith that you will open them again with the morning's sun. Who will stand by your bedside with bellows to force the air into your sleepless lungs, —or, indeed, may they not fall asleep and fail you, when you have forgotten them in your slumber? Who will keep his hand on your heart and see that it pumps on when you are unconscious? When you fall asleep you go out of consciousness with an abiding faith in something or Somewhat, that you will return to consciousness with the new day. You would not dare to close your eyes in slumber this night, if you mistrusted that the machinery of your bodies would stop before the morning light. You would force yourself into wakefulness by torture and by terror, day after day and night after night, until your wills at last succumbed to nature. Take out faith in the safety of helpless sleep, and the human race will become a pandemonium of madmen. So I might go through all the processes of living, and find faith at every step. If you must reason before the trusting you will die before you reach your conclusions. You live by faith. The processes of living are mainly faith in the Divine Preserver and in the uniformity of His law. *J. P. D. John*, in *Signs of God.*

Faith and Reason. In all prophetic things, trust thy faith before thy reason. Reason is against the migration of swallows; reason is against the labor of the bee; it would be easy to demonstrate, from reason, that both were in a delusion. Yet the swallow has proved right; the bee has proved right—right by instinct. Thou, too, hast an instinct, my brother; it is called faith. Reason has taken many of thine instincts away. But she has left thee this one—the prophetic power of the bee. To thee, as to the swallow, God has given an impulse of unrest—a necessity to migrate toward skies thou hast not seen. To thee, as to the bee, God has given the impulse to seek a tabernacle of which thou hast no experience—the dwelling place of the Most High. Faith is thine evidence of things not seen. *George Matheson,* in *Times of Retirement.*

Faith the Instinct of the Spiritual World. Christ's mind was continually fixed on faith, the word was ever on His lips. It was the keynote of His preaching. His custom was to divide men into classes from the standpoint of religion, not morals—those who believed, those who believed not. He marvelled twice: once at men's unbelief (Mark 6.6); once at a Roman centurion's faith (Matt. 8.10). When any one sought His help He demanded faith (Matt. 9.28). When He rebuked His disciples it was usually because they had little faith (Mark 4.40).

Christ insisted on faith for the same reason that a mathematician relies on the sense of numbers, or an artist on the sense of beauty; it was the one means of knowledge in His department. He was the Prophet of God and must address the God faculty in man. Between faith and God there was the same correspondence as between the eye and light. Faith proves God: God demands faith. When any one ignored faith and fell back on sight in the quest for God, Christ was in despair. Before such wilful stupidity He was amazed and helpless. You want to see, was His constant complaint, when in the nature of things you must believe. There is one sphere where sight is the instrument of knowledge: use it there—it is not my sphere. There is another where faith is the instrument; use it there—that is my sphere. But do not interchange your instruments. You can not see what is spiritual; you might as well expect to hear a picture. What you see you do not believe; it is a misnomer; you see it. What you believe you can not see; it would be an absurdity; you believe it. Faith is the instinct of the spiritual world: it is the sixth sense—the sense of the unseen. *John Watson,* in *The Expositor.*

II Unknown Heroes of Faith

Some have No Memorial. The forty-fourth chapter of the poem known as Ecclesiasticus begins with a song in praise of famous men of the past and also of nameless heroes, for

> Some there be, which have no memorial;
> Who are perished as though they had not been,
> And are become as though they had not been born,
> And their children after them.
> But these were men of mercy,
> Whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten.

In like manner the eleventh chapter of Hebrews begins with the illustrious heroes of faith, and then passes to other, nameless heroes "those all, having had witness borne to them through their faith." Time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, says the writer of Hebrews; and so time will fail us if we speak of Luther and Savanorola, and the Pilgrim Fathers, of Gladstone and Phillips Brooks, and of the multitude of modern noted heroes of faith that readily come to one's mind. In London's Westminster Abbey and New York's Temple of Fame the names of the great and famous are commemorated, but in God's Book of Life are recorded the names of heroes of faith, of whom the world may not know. There is a book published every year in England that contains the names of her most noted men and women, beginning with the King. It has the names of the officers of state and the heads of noble families, and also a list of the officers and men, some of them obscure soldiers or sailors, whose self-sacrifice and bravery have entitled them to wear the little Victoria Cross. Let us speak

of a few little known heroes who are nobly entitled to wear the cross of Christ.

Beatrice and Monna Tessa. Messer Portinari, of Florence, Italy, gave one day a great feast in his beautiful palace. His eight-year-old daughter Beatrice was present, and helping in the work was a servant named Monna Tessa. All the world has heard of Beatrice, for Dante saw her at that feast, in her crimson dress and her jewels; her pretty face and kind voice made him think her "the youngest of the angels," and in his great poem he has immortalized her as the incarnation of all virtue. Do you know the name of Monna Tessa? When her work was over she was accustomed to go out and care for God's poor in the hovels of Florence. As the huge palace was not all occupied she asked her master to let her have the use of two vacant rooms, Portinari consented, and when he went to them some time later he found them filled with sick paupers whom this servant woman was supporting out of her wages and caring for in her spare moments. "This is God's work, and I will help you in it," he told her. He built a small hospital and put her in charge. To that beginning the poor of Florence have for centuries owed their care in sickness. On the wall of one of the largest hospitals there to-day, a successor of that first one, hangs a bas-relief of a homely, kind face in a servant's hood, but even the patients themselves do not all know that it is the face of Monna Tessa.

A Sketch from Life. It was fifteen minutes past opening time when Mr. Merritt, cashier of the Union National, reached his desk and explained his tardiness. "My darkey was burned out last night," he said. The clerks had heard before of Mr. Merritt's colored protégé, so their interest was aroused as the cashier proceeded to details.

It was late in the afternoon when the fire had broken out, the flames doing speedy and thorough work.

"We knew that Abe would soon be coming from work," Mr. Merritt said, "and we hated to see him turn the corner and see what had happened to his little all. Pretty soon we saw him come into the road, and we watched and waited. Our hearts fairly ached for the poor fellow. All at once he stopped and staggered. Then he picked himself together, and came slowly toward the desolation. The neighbors stood around wanting to say something, but all of us seemed tongue-tied. When Abe reached the group, as we stood near the ruins of his home, he took off his hat and bowed his head. Then we heard him say, quietly but clearly, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

"I tell you, men," continued the cashier, as he wiped his eyes, "I'm not much on churches, and you know it; but I think I'd give every dollar I'm worth if I could have a religion like that." Before the clerks turned to their tasks, they made an arrangement by which, later in the day, the family of Abram Lewis received a substantial lift in time of need. *D. Baines-Griffiths,* in *Sunday-School Times.*

III Missionary Topic Heroes of Faith in Mission Lands

Mary Moffatt. Mary Moffatt labored with her husband, Robert Moffatt, for ten years in the heart of Africa without seeing a single person converted. They were four thousand miles from the frontier of civilization, the only white people in a world of savages. When she received a letter from a friend in England asking what could be sent them, there seemed no prospect that they would ever reap the fruit of their labors, yet she bravely wrote back, "Send us a communion service; we shall want it some day." The service reached them three years later, the day before the first converts were baptized.

True to the Faith. In the early days of the Indian mutiny, seven cadets just over from England were murdered. The eighth, a lad of sixteen, was left for dead, but survived in spite of some horrible wounds. For four days he succeeded in hiding himself in a ravine, but was discovered, dragged to the native lines and thrust into a hut as a prisoner. He found there another prisoner, a Christian catechist, who was undergoing torture at the hands of the sepoys to make him renounce his faith. His strength and courage had left him, and he was giving way, when the English boy, forgetful of his own wounds and the further penalty of suffering that he might be providing for himself, gallantly cried: "Don't deny Christ! Never deny Christ whatever may happen!"

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Something of his spirit was infused into his companion. He refused to recant, and in spite of further torture, he kept the faith for which he had already suffered so much. Both catechist and cadet were rescued, but the cadet died of his wounds four days later.

In Pekin, nine years ago, there was a young Chinaman who had been for a time a pupil in the school sustained by the Presbyterian mission. He begged the missionaries in charge of the school to give him some Christian work to do. They saw his earnestness, and fitted him out with a colporteur's pack, and from that time on he gave himself to the task of carrying Bibles out into the country places.

In the course of his journeyings he learned much of the Boxers. He listened in order to be able to help his friends, the missionaries. The hour came. It was June 13th, the day of one of the early massacres. The young colporteur himself was in a place of safety, but others were not. He hurried into the city to give warning to the Methodist Compound—the one in greatest danger—and to Christians throughout the city. He did save them. So far as is known, all whom he warned escaped; but it was too late to save himself. The infuriated mob surrounded him. "Are you a Christian?" they asked. "I am," he replied, and straightway began to preach. They beat him upon the head and mouth to silence him, but still the eager words came. Finally they killed him with the most terrible torture. He died with his Master's name upon his lips.

It is not a long step from India and 1857 to China and 1900; but if it were, the spirit which lived in the heart of that English boy and that Chinese youth would bridge it. Nor would even the skeptic maintain that those two brave souls died in vain. Sepoys and Boxers alike, steeped in superstition, hatred and cruelty as they were, yet marveled and admired; for the world-old mystery had been once more enacted. The victims, dying, were conquerors. *Youth's Companion.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Infidelity is practical faith in things seen and unfaith in things unseen. *Henry van Dyke.*

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time. *Longfellow.*

The eye of faith, like the Röntgen Rays, can pass through material substance. *Alexander Maclaren.*

All that I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen. *Emerson.*

Faith is the heroism of intellect. *C. H. Parkhurst.*

Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him. Heb. 11.6.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

There comes to us, as there came to Moses, times of decision on which great results in character depend; are we willing, like him, to give up what seems desirable for the moment for a great good that is lasting?

As God used Moses to deliver Israel, so He can use each one of us for some part, however small, of His great plans.

Biography, Carlye tells us, is the most universally pleasant, universally profitable of all reading. We have read the biographies of the Bible to little profit if we have not learned from them the possibility and the duty and the blessing of great faith in God.

"I could run into Christ's arms though He had a sharp sword in each hand," said Martin Luther, and yet at times he deeply lamented because he had not greater faith. "Oh, if I had faith! If I could only say in faith, Our Father!" he would sometimes exclaim, and he confessed that unless he read the Bible and thought about Christ and prayed every day, his heart became doubtful and fearful. His words show how only we can increase our faith so that we may endure.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Faith, says the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. Faith was the characteristic of the Hebrew forefathers. The belief that the worlds have been formed by the word of God is faith. And then follows a list of great men who believed God, trusted that He would fulfil His promises, and lived in accordance with this trust, their lives illustrations of the definition of faith. The list begins with Abel and Enoch and Noah. Then comes Abraham, the friend of God who journeyed to the land of promise, not knowing whither he was going, only believing that he was obeying God's will, and who was willing to sacrifice Isaac although the command seemed to conflict with the promise of a great posterity, for his faith led him to believe that God is able to raise from the dead. Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Esau, Jacob's blessing of the sons of Joseph, and Joseph's commandment that his bones should be taken away by the children of Israel when the time came for them to leave Egypt, were all acts of faith, being actuated by trust in God's overruling. Faith led the parents of Moses to disobey the king's command and hide him for three months, and when Moses was grown up faith led him to choose aright between a life of pleasure and ease at Pharaoh's court and of ill treatment with the people of God, prefering to give up present good for future gain. Faith led him to leave Egypt, despising the king's wrath, to endure, to keep the passover, to lead the children of God through the Red sea as by dry land.

The chapter closes with yet other instances of known and unknown heroes who endured all things as seeing him who is invisible.

SUBJECT FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

Is there a decline in faith?

Faith in eternal life makes the poor feel rich and makes the rich feel a sense of grave responsibility and trusteeship. If there has been a marked decline in religious faith, that fact must be of profound and far-reaching significance. It alters the basic conditions of civilization. It becomes a factor in the markets. It changes the standards and affects the values of things which are bought and sold. It concerns the immediate interests of those who never had such a faith as much as it does the lives of those who have had the faith and lost it. If there has been a decline in the faith in the future life, to what extent is it responsible for the special phenomena of our time, the eager pursuit of sudden wealth, the shameless luxury and display, the gross and corrupting extravagance, the misuse of "swollen fortunes," the indifference of law, the growth of graft, the abuses of great corporate power, the social unrest, the spread of demagogy, the advances of socialism, the appeals to class hatred?

Whatever may be a man's own personal beliefs, there is no one who would not prefer to do business with a person who really believes in a future life. If there are fewer men of such faith in the world, it makes a big difference, and if faith is to continue to decline, this will require new adjustments. There are certainly, on the surface, many signs of such a decline. These include a falling off in church attendance, the abandonment of family worship, the giving over of Sunday, more and more, to pleasure and labor, the separation of religious from secular education, under the stern demands of non-sectarianism, the growing up of a generation of uninstructed as our fathers were in the study of the Bible, the secularization of a portion of the church itself, and its inability in a large way to gain the confidence of the laboring people. If these are really signs of a decay of religious faith, then indeed there is no more important problem before us than that of either discovering some adequate substitute for faith, or of taking immediate steps to check a development that has within it the seeds of a national disaster. Condensed from the *Wall Street Journal.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Younger pupils should bring to class next Sunday their scrapbooks and older pupils their note books containing their Life of Paul. If the lesson period is given to a general school review, take the books home for examination.

LESSON XII—JUNE 20

REVIEW

Golden Text for the Quarter

With great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Acts 4.33.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF CHAPTERS IX-XV OF THE ACTS, AND THREE LESSONS FROM THE EPISTLES

(A general exercise for the entire school. Select sixteen pupils from different classes, and let each one commit to memory one of the sections below. All should stand together before the school and recite in order what they have learned.)

Lesson I. There was a centurion at Cæsarea who was a God-fearing Gentile, but he needed instruction in regard to Jesus the Christ. He was led by a vision to send to Joppa for Peter, and Peter was prepared for the summons by a vision that came to him on the housetop at the home of Simon the tanner, where he had gone to pray. A receptacle filled with all kinds of beasts and birds and creeping things, seemingly like a sheet held up at the four corners, was let down from heaven three times before him, and he was told to kill and eat. He recoiled at the thought of eating anything Levitically unclean, but he heard a voice saying, "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." While Peter was pondering on the vision, the messengers from Cornelius were announced, and he was divinely directed to go with them, for they were sent by the Spirit.

Peter obeyed and went with the messengers to the home of the Gentile Cornelius where he proclaimed to him and his household Jesus the Christ, for his vision on the housetop had taught him that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him. While he was preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on all that heard him, and Peter had them baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. On his return to Jerusalem the other apostles objected to his course, but they were convinced by his report that it was God's purpose to grant repentance unto the Gentiles also.

Lesson II. In those days Herod the King, in order to gain favor with the leading Jews, had James, the brother of John, put to death, and Peter imprisoned till after the Passover. The church prayed earnestly for Peter's release. Although he was chained to two soldiers and two guards were on the watch, yet when the day came in which Herod intended to put him to death, he was not to be found, for he had been strangely freed. An angel had loosed his chains and led him forth.

Peter went at once to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where the disciples were praying for him. Rhoda, the maid who answered his knock, was too surprised at first to let him in. After telling them all how he had escaped, he sought a place where he would be safe from Herod. Herod ordered the guards of the prison put to death, and not long afterwards he himself died from a loathsome disease. Meanwhile "the word of God grew and multiplied."

Lesson III. Our lessons return in time to the death of Stephen. Saul, the Pharisee at whose feet the witnesses laid their garments, had zealously persecuted the Christians at Jerusalem, and driven them from the city. Armed with letters from the high priest, he started for Damascus in their pursuit, purposing to bring back to Jerusalem as prisoners as many as possible. On the way a wonderful event took place. A sudden blinding light and a voice from heaven convinced him that Jesus is the Christ, and that in persecuting His

followers he was persecuting the divine Saviour. He was led by the hand into the city, for he had arisen from the vision totally blind. After three days of darkness, Ananias, who had been divinely sent to him, came and laid his hands on him, bidding him in the name of the Christ receive his sight. Immediately his sight was restored and he was baptized as a humble follower of the lowly Nazarene whom he had persecuted.

After his conversion, Saul spent three years in Arabia. He preached in the synagogues of Damascus till he was obliged to flee because the Jews sought to kill him. As the gates of the city were watched, his friends let him down over the wall in a basket. At Jerusalem he sought to join the disciples, but they were afraid of him until Barnabas assured them that he was no longer the persecutor but a fellow-Christian. At Jerusalem, too, the Jews sought to kill him, but he made his escape to Cæsarea and went to Tarsus, his native town, in Cilicia.

Lesson IV. Certain Jews, natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, who were driven from Jerusalem by the persecution that followed the stoning of Stephen, went to Antioch in Syria and proclaimed to the Gentiles there that Jesus is the Christ, and many of them believed. A new name was given to Christ's followers here at Antioch, a name that included both Jews and Gentiles, that of Christians. When the report of the reception of Gentiles into Christian fellowship reached the church at Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent to Antioch to learn the situation. Finding that the will of God was evidently being fulfilled, Barnabas rejoiced and exhorted them all to remain steadfast in their loyalty to Christ. He went to Tarsus for Saul, and brought him back to help in the work. After a year of teaching there the two workers went to Jerusalem with funds sent by the new church in Antioch to their brothers in need, and when they returned to Antioch they brought a third helper with them, John Mark.

Lesson V. Among the prophets and teachers at Antioch, Barnabas and Saul were divinely chosen for work elsewhere. After fasting and praying and laying on of hands, the little Christian community sent these two on their way, on the first missionary journey, as we call it. With John Mark they set sail from the port of Seleucia and went to Cyprus. They preached at Salamis and then crossed the island to Paphos. There the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, desired to hear the word of God, but Elymas, the sorcerer, endeavored to dissuade him from accepting Christ. Saul, who is now and henceforth called Paul, addressed Elymas as the enemy of all righteousness, and told him that the hand of the Lord was upon him and he should be blind for a season. Elymas was immediately stricken blind, and had to be led by the hand. The miracle led the proconsul to believe the teaching of the Lord.

Lesson VI. From Paphos the missionaries sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, and there John Mark left them. The others went on to Antioch of Pisidia. On the Sabbath the rulers of the synagogue requested them to speak, and Paul addressed the company. He referred to Israel's past history, told them that Jesus the Saviour was a descendant of David, that John the Baptist had announced Him, that the Jews at Jerusalem had crucified Him, and that God had raised Him from the dead and He had been afterwards seen by many witnesses. He told them that he had brought them good tidings; through this Jesus he proclaimed unto them remission of sins, by whom every one that believes is justified; and he urged them not to neglect so great a salvation. Paul was asked to speak again the next Sabbath. During the week many came to him for instruction, and on the next Sabbath a great multitude met to hear the word of God. The jealousy of the Jews was aroused, and they contradicted and reviled Paul till he boldly declared that they had refused the word of God, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life, and he should now turn to the Gentiles. Then he quoted from Isaiah, "I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation to the uttermost part of the earth." The Gentiles rejoiced and glorified God, and the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region.

The chief women of Antioch, urged on by the Jews, and the chief men of the city aroused such hostility to Paul and Barnabas that they forced them to leave and go to Iconium. In the synagogue at Iconium they taught and many, both of the Jews and the Greeks, believed their

message, but again the Jews stirred up the people against them, and when they learned of a plot to stone them they fled to the region of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe.

Lesson VII. Through Paul a cripple at Lystra was enabled to walk, and the people thought that Paul and Barnabas must be gods. They wished to offer sacrifice to them as to Jupiter and Mercury, but Paul prevented this, telling them that he was human like themselves. Then he sought to turn them from their false gods to the true God who had shown Himself to them in the gifts of nature. The people were persuaded by the hostile Jews who had come to Lystra from Antioch and Iconium, to persecute Paul, and after stoning him they dragged his supposedly dead body without the city walls. But Paul revived and entered the city for the night, and on the morrow went with Barnabas to Derbe. On their return journey to Antioch in Syria they stopped at Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia, exhorting the disciples to remain steadfast in the faith, and organizing their churches.

Paul and Barnabas continued their journey, going to Pisidia and Pamphylia, thence to Perga and then to Attalia, where they took ship for Antioch in Syria, their starting point. To the church there they told all that God had done through them, and that He had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Lesson VIII. The rejoicing at Antioch was disturbed by certain Pharisees who came from Jerusalem and declared that the Gentiles could not be saved unless they first became Jews by receiving the rite of circumcision. Paul and Barnabas were sent with others to Jerusalem to confer with the church there. After long discussions, and after Peter had declared that God in His dealings with the Gentiles had made no distinction between them and the Jews, and Paul had told of the wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through him and Barnabas, and James had strengthened Peter's argument by an appeal to prophecy, the whole church agreed to the expressed judgment of James, that the Gentiles should abstain from four things repugnant to the Jews and should not be troubled further. An official letter was written, condemning the Pharisees who had stirred up the trouble, commending Paul and Barnabas, and giving the decision. The letter was carried to Antioch by two men appointed for the service, and it caused great rejoicing in the church. Paul and Barnabas returned with them and tarried awhile in Antioch.

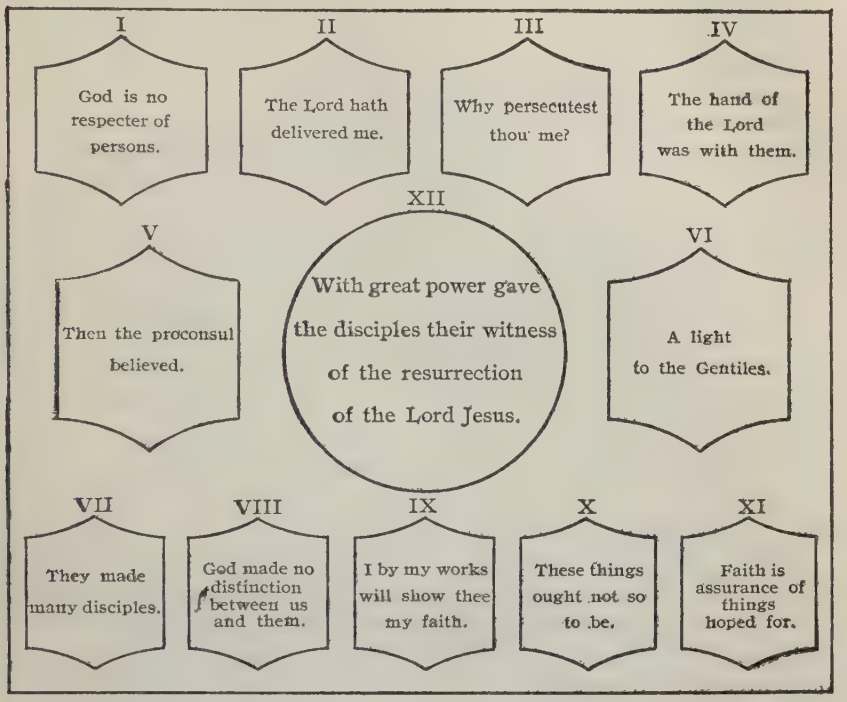
Lesson IX. A lesson from the Epistle of James, the ruler of the church at Jerusalem, is now our theme. "What is the use," he questions, "of having faith if you have not works? Is there any use in telling a poor and needy person to be warm and filled if you do nothing for him? Just as profitless is that dead faith that does not lead to works. Faith can not be proved without works, but works are an evidence of faith. To admit that God is One is not sufficient; even demons admit as much. Know that faith without works is barren. It was their works that proved the faith of Abraham and of Rahab. Faith apart from works is dead.

Lesson X. "Be not many of you anxious to be teachers," continues James in his letter, and then he passes on to the sins of the tongue. He is a perfect man who never speaks amiss, having himself in perfect control. As bit and bridle guide the horse and a small rudder the ship, so the tongue, which is a small member of the body, does great things. The tongue is a fire, a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we both bless God and curse man, and this is no more right than that the same fountain should send forth both sweet and bitter water, or that a fig tree should bear olives, or a vine figs, or salt water yield sweet water.

Lesson XI. Faith, says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. **Through faith we believe** that the worlds have been framed by the word of God. Then the triumphs of faith are set forth in this famous eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Among the heroes of faith Abel, Enoch and Noah are mentioned. Abraham's readiness to offer up Isaac in obedience to the will of God; Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Esau and Jacob's blessing of the sons of Joseph in accordance with the divine will, the saving of the infant Moses by his parents, and Moses' choice as a young man of ill-treatment with the people of God rather than of ease with the

people of Pharaoh, his departure from Egypt, his leading of the children of Israel through the Red Sea; these and many other instances are given as examples of faith in the over-ruling power of God.

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW



See directions, page 125.

	Chief Persons	Chief Facts
I.	Peter and Cornelius	A Great Lesson
II.	Peter and the Angel	A Great Release
III.	Saul and Ananias	A Great Conversion
IV.	Barnabas and Saul	A Great Name
V.	Saul and Sergius Paulus	A Great Mission
VI.	Paul and the Antiocheans	A Great Address
VII.	Paul and the Lystrans	A Great Persecution
VIII.	Paul and the Judaisers	A Great Concession
IX.	James and his Readers	A Great Distinction
X.	James and his Readers	A Great Power
XI.	A writer and his Hebrew Readers	A Great Faith

Practical Lesson Truths

See directions, page 125.

Lesson I. We should not scorn those of different races or of different beliefs from our own.

Lesson II. Prayer is still a privilege and a power.

Lesson III. Paul's great question, "Who art thou, Lord?" is a question that must be settled in one way or another by every one of us.

Lesson IV. We who are called Christians should be akin to Christ, and cleave unto Him with purpose of heart.
Lesson V. We, too, are set apart for service.
Lesson VI. There is danger of our being self-condemned like the Jews of Antioch.
Lesson VII. We should learn Paul's lesson that we are indebted to God for all things.
Lesson VIII. The gospel is for all people; we must have a part in giving the gospel to others.
Lesson IX. Our lives must prove our faith.
Lesson X. We must guard our speech.
Lesson XI. We may be heroes of faith.

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

See page 126.

Lesson I. What did Peter see in a vision? What was the meaning of the vision? What did it lead Peter to do?
Lesson II. What apostle did Herod kill? Which one did he have put in prison? How did he escape?
Lesson III. Why did Paul persecute the Christians? What happened on the way to Damascus? Who came to him in his blindness and what took place?
Lesson IV. In what city were the disciples first called Christians? Who was sent to these Christians from Jerusalem? Whom did he get to help him in the good work there?
Lesson V. Where did Paul first go on his first missionary journey? Who went with him? What noted man of Cyprus was converted?
Lesson VI. Where did Paul go from Cyprus? What did he tell the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia when they opposed him?
Lesson VII. What miracle was wrought at Lystra? What did the people think Paul and Barnabas were? What did Paul prevent them from doing? What did they do to Paul?
Lesson VIII. When the Jews from Jerusalem said that the Gentiles in Antioch must keep the Jewish laws and customs, what did the church at Antioch do? Did the Council at Jerusalem agree with those Jews? In the letter sent back to the church, what was said about Paul and Barnabas?
Lesson IX. How can one prove that he has true faith in God?
Lesson X. To what does James compare the tongue? What harm can the tongue do? What good?
Lesson XI. How did Abraham show his faith in God? How did Moses?

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. How was Peter taught the lesson that the gospel was for Gentiles as well as Jews? 2. How did Barnabas learn that lesson? (Lesson II.) 3. Where did Paul declare that fact? (Lesson VI.) 4. What did Jews from Jerusalem declare at Antioch in regard to the Gentiles? 5. What was the judgment of the council at Jerusalem in regard to it? 6. What led to Paul's conversion? 7. What did Barnabas do for him at Jerusalem? At Antioch? 8. What city was the starting point for Paul's jonrney? 9. What cities did he visit on his first missionary tour? 10. What opposition did he meet? 11. What successes did he win? 12. What can you tell about the Epistle of James? 13. What is the teaching in that Epistle in regard to faith? 14. In regard to the tongue? 15. What can you tell about the Epistle to the Hebrews?

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

After picturing the scene of each lesson, call for its title, golden text, and sentence sermon learned, and ask a few questions in regard to the lesson.

Lesson I. First I see a soldier talking with several men; now the men are starting out on a journey. Next I see a man kneeling in prayer on the top of a house. Now the men first seen are knocking at the gate of this house, and soon the man who was praying is hastening down to see them. The last scene shows me a room in another house and the man who was praying is now talking to a group of people who are listening to him eagerly.

Lesson II. This is a prison scene, and there is a man sleeping between two soldiers. But see, his chains fall off, he passes out beside the watching guards, the great gate swings open of its own accord, he walks along the street and enters a house where there are many people.

Lesson III. I see a company going along a road leading to a great city. Suddenly one of the men falls to the ground. There is great excitement when he arises, for he is unable to see. The scene changes to a house in the city. A man is standing with his hands on the blind man's eyes; he takes them away and the blind man is able to see.

Lesson IV. A man talks to great crowds of people. Then he goes away on a journey and returns with another man. At last we see these two men starting off and when they come back a third man is with them.

Lesson V. At a prayer meeting two men are bidding others good-bye. Now they are sailing away. In the third scene these men are on shore, surrounded by many men who are looking in great surprise at them and at another man who is groping about as though he could not see.

Lesson VI. We seem to be in a church. A man is reading aloud. Now he has finished, and another man goes to one who sits among the people and says something to him. The man spoken to comes forward and talks, and every one listens. Again the same scene comes before us, but other men are answering the speaker and there seems to be much excitement.

Lesson VII. This is a very gay scene. Men are about to put garlands on two astonished-looking men, and others are falling to the ground before them. These men have thrust the others away, and one of them is speaking earnestly to the crowd. In the next scene people are shouting and hurling stones; now they are dragging some one out beyond the city. The crowd disappears, and only a few men are standing over a form on the ground.

Lesson VIII. A little company of men are going on a journey by land. Now they are in the midst of a solemn gathering.

ESSAY WORK FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. The early life and education of Paul and his career as a persecutor of the Christians. Acts 7.58-8.3; 18.3; 22.3-5. 20, 27, 28; 23.6, 16; 26.4, 5, 9-11; Phil. 3.5, 6; Gal. 1.13, 14; 1 Cor. 15.9; 1 Tim. 1.13.
2. The commission of Paul. Acts 9.1-19; 22.5-16; 26.12-18; Gal. 1.15-17; 1 Cor. 9.1; 15.8; Phil. 3.7-11.
3. Paul's early ministry in Damascus, Jerusalem, and Antioch in Syria. Acts 9.19-30; 11.26-30; 12-25; 22.17-21; 26.19, 20; Gal. 1.17-24; 2 Cor. 11. 32, 33.
4. Paul's first missionary journey. Acts 13 and 14.
5. Paul's second sojourn at Antioch, his visit to Jerusalem, and Peter's visit to Antioch. Acts 15.1-35; Gal. 2.11-21.
6. Paul's sermon at Antioch.
7. The provinces of Asia Minor and the cities there visited by Paul on his first missionary journey.
8. Herod Agrippa II and his relation to the other Herods of the New Testament.
9. For each lesson write a truth learned, and a sentence sermon, a Bible verse, and a thought of your own in regard to that truth.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Who wrote the Epistle to the Romans? 2. Under what circumstances? 3. What words of Jesus are recalled by verse 8? (Matt. 22.34-40.) 4. Where in the Pentateuch are the Ten Commandments given? (See the Subject-Index of Bible.) 5. Why does Paul here make no reference to the first table? 6. Where in the Old Testament is the command to love one's neighbor as one's self given? (See Subject-Index, under Neighbor, how to treat.) 7. How does love fulfil the law? 8. In what parable did Jesus teach the duty of loving one's neighbor? (Luke 11.25-37.) 9. What does "put on the Lord Jesus" mean? 10. Is it possible to obey this counsel in these days? 11. Commit to memory the description of the Christian's armor in Eph. 6.13-18.

LESSON XIII—JUNE 27

TEMPERANCE LESSON

Read Romans 13.8-14. Commit verses 8, 10.

Golden Text

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 13.14.

LESSON TEXT Romans 13.8-14

8 Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.

11. And this, knowing the season, that already it is time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we *first* believed. 12 The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *Owe no man anything.* Render to all their dues, verse 7.—*Save to love one another.* A debt that can never be paid up.— *He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law.* See verse 10; Matt. 22.39, 40; Gal. 5.14.

9. *For this.* For this is the law, is the meaning. What follows is proof that one who loves his neighbor fulfils the law. See Ex. 20.13-17; Deut. 5.17-21. "He that loves another will not deprive him of his wife, of his life, of his property, of his good name; and will not even permit a desire to enter his heart which would lead him to wish to possess anything that is the property of another" (*Clarke*).—*Thou shalt not bear false witness* is omitted in the Revised Version, as it is not found here in the best manuscripts. The seventh commandment is given before the sixth, as in the Gospels, Mark 10.19; Luke 18.20.—*If there is any other commandment.* Any commandment in regard to one's duty to one's neighbor; the first table of the law refers to duties to God.—*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* Lev. 19.18.

10. *Love worketh no harm to his neighbor.* Love (personified here as in the 13th Chapter of 1 Cor.) breaks none of the commandments mentioned.

11. *And this, knowing.* And do this, *i. e.* love your neighbor, knowing.—*The season.* The present conditions.—*Awake out of sleep.* Be vigilant, no longer inactive. "Paul means a state of insensibility to things as they really are in God's sight" (*Newman*).—*For now.* The reason for awakening.—*Salvation nearer to us than when we first believed.* Probably Paul refers by *salvation* to Christ's coming, which he thinks can not long be delayed, but it is true of individual salvation.

12. *The night is far spent, the day is at hand.* Various interpretations of this metaphor may be given. The night is the Lord's absence, the day is to be ushered in by His appearance, says Stifler; the night is the present obscurity in contrast to the eternal day, says Beet.—*The works of darkness.* Some of them are enumerated in verse 13.—*The armor of light.* Be strong

in the Lord and in the strength of his might, put on the whole armor of God, Eph. 6.10, 11. The description of this armor is given in Eph. 6.13-18. See also 2 Cor. 6.7; 10.4; 1 Thess. 5.8.

13. *Let us walk becomingly, as in the day.* "Two figures of speech are here. Let us walk as in the light of day, let us walk as in the day of our Lord; let us walk as men commonly do in the eyes of their fellowmen, remembering that we are walking in the eye of God" (*Jowett*).

14. *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Live and move and have your being in Christ, Acts 17.28.—*The flesh.* "Here, as usual, the whole man viewed apart from his relation to Christ" (*Stifler*).

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

11. *Knowing the season.* St. Paul, no doubt, was still in eager expectation of the immediate second coming of Christ; and that expectation has proved mistaken. Now our Lord plainly did not mean His disciples to know when His judgment was to be made manifest, and St. Paul apparently recognized this (1 Thes. 5.2; the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night), so that his immediate anticipation of the end can never have been part of his faith—never more that the reflection of the eager desire which filled the heart of the Church. On the other hand, our Lord did mean His disciples to go on expecting Him. Thus St. Paul's admonition is as applicable now as ever. The future of the world and of each nation and institution is precarious; things which seem solid and strong may crumble and melt; how soon God is to make plain His judgments, in part or on the whole, we do not know; when each of us is to pass by death to the great account we do not know. There is no reasonable attitude towards the unknown coming of judgment except to be ready. *Charles Gore,* in *The Epistle to the Romans.*

12. *The night is far spent.* The Epistle to the Romans was written at Corinth, which, both as the seat of local government, and because of its critical position on a strait between two seas, must have been garrisoned by a strong military force. The image which always rises before my mind when I read the passage, is this: I fancy St. Paul after a day spent in hard work, partly in tent-making and partly in preaching and in visitation among his converts, writing far through the night to the Christians in Rome, and just at daybreak, when the sentinels are changing guard, and the morning light glances on their armor, while at the same time the last sounds of debauched revellers in the street fall upon his ears, expressing himself in the now familiar words "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." *John S. Howson,* in *The Metaphors of St. Paul.*

12. *Works of darkness.* Any law that is obnoxious to the saloon-keepers because its enforcement interferes with their "business" is *prima facie* a good law. Such seems to be the statute known as the "Bishops' Law" of New Jersey. It annoys the sellers of intoxicating—that is, poisonous—liquors. Especially do they dislike the clause requiring them to expose the interior of their dramshops to the public gaze on Sundays, when the shops are supposed to be shut. Exactly. Let them put up the shutters, and they do not care for the prohibition against selling. It's the publicity they dread. Their deeds being evil, they love darkness rather than light. The respectable people of New Jersey will make a serious mistake if they allow this good law to be repealed or modified in the interest of the enemies of sobriety and order. If anything is done with it, it should be made more stringent and comprehensive. *New York Observer.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

14. *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* To be *clothed with a person* is a Greek phrase, signifying to assume the interest of another, to enter into his views, to imitate him and be wholly on his side. St. Chrysostom particularly mentions this as a common phrase, such a one hath put on such a one; *i. e.* he closely follows and imitates him. Eusebius, in his Life of Constantine, says the sons put on their father; they seemed to enter into his spirit and

views, and to imitate him in all things. The mode of speech itself is taken from the custom of stage-players; they assumed the name and garments of the person whose character they were to act; and endeavored as closely as possible to imitate him in their spirit, words, and actions. *Adam Clarke.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the 12th and 13th chapters of Romans, Paul holds up the duties of love and justice. He urges self-dedication, warns against self-conceit, exhorts to mutual love and to obedience to rulers. We must obey rulers, for they are divinely ordained agents. Only evil doers need fear those in authority. Let us obey because obedience is right. They have the right to levy taxes; let us pay these and all dues—tribute, custom, fear, honor. Let us pay up all debts, Paul repeats, except the debt of love which is always due, for it can never be paid off and cancelled. Love as the fulfilment of the law, the duties of love and light over against the deeds of vice and darkness, form the theme of our lesson text.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Where is the island of Samoa? On that far-distant island an English writer, Robert Louis Stevenson, lived for a time and was very kind to the native people. Mataafa was a chief who claimed the throne in Upolo, and he and ten chiefs were imprisoned. Mr. Stevenson sent them many presents to make them comfortable in their prison, and when they were freed they wondered what they could do to show him their gratitude. At last they decided to build a fine wide road through the bush to his house. No Samoan likes to work, and Samoan chiefs think that it is beneath their dignity to work, but they were willing to do anything for their friend. They built this road, and at a great feast held when it was finished they gave it the name of "The Road of the Loving Heart." Paul wrote a letter to the Romans and gave them many good counsels; the first which our lesson text speaks of is that everyone should pay his debts of love, should build Roads of Loving Hearts.

For Older Pupils. I, Tertius, who write the epistle, salute you in the Lord, it says in one of the last verses of Romans. Tertius was Paul's amanuensis. We may think of Paul as sitting in a chamber of the home of Aquila and Priscilla or of Titus Justus at Corinth and dictating his words to Tertius, who wrote with a reed pen on sheets of papyrus, as the amanuensis is doing in our illustration. What was he writing? (See the Epistle to the Romans, page 24 of this Guide, and the Historical Background of this lesson.)

A Poet dictating to an Amanuensis. From Ainé and Barré's Herculaneum and Pompeii

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Unpayable Debt

Love the Fulfillment of Law. He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law. The law in regard to our duties to our neighbor is given in the second table of the commandments, four of which Paul repeats and then sums all up in the commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The story runs that "in age and feebleness extreme," the apostle John was carried day after day into the market-place of Ephesus and to the crowd that assembled to hear the few words he could speak he said, Little children,

love one another. Grown weary of the constant repetition of these words some one ventured at last to ask why he did not tell them something else. "Because," he replied, "this is the sum and substance of the gospel; when this is done all is done." What Paul and John and Peter (above all things being fervent in your love, 1 Peter 4.8) taught was the teaching and the life of Jesus during the years of His public ministry. He would make sin impossible by filling every heart with love for others. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Our love for Jesus the Christ is to find expression in our love for our brothers.

"Say not 'I love the Lord' unless you find
Within you, welling up by day and night,
A love, strong full and deep, for all mankind."

The love of which Christ and Paul speak is no vague, mystical feeling, but a real, practical force in our every-day conduct, a controlling principle, that will not only prevent our doing evil to our brothers and thus make us fulfil the moral law, but will cause us to seek their welfare instead of our own and so fulfil the law of Christ. Love is shown by service.

It is an interesting fact that our words *duty* and *debt* come (through two different French words) from the same Latin word, *debere,* to owe. *Debere* is composed of *de* and *habere,* to have on loan. The love which we have from God we have on loan, it is a debt, a duty, we owe to our brothers.

Unpaid Debts of Love. According to Christ's teaching, the priest and Levite did not pay their debt to their Samaritan neighbor, because they thought him a stranger with no claim on them. Dives ignored his rich man's debt to Lazarus. Of those who are to appear on the left hand of Christ's judgment-seat, each will be condemned because he never realized his debt to Christ in the person of all those who had needs to which he might have ministered.

We can all think of manifold debts—to the lonely whom we might visit, the misunderstood whom we might sympathize with, the ignorant whom we might teach, the weak and oppressed whom we might support, the sinful whom we might convert and establish in good living; so many debts to family and friend; so many debts to Englishmen and fellow Christians, to Africans, and Asiatics. Is it not bewildering to attempt even to realize our debts? And yet, let a man make a beginning, and all will be well. Let him steadily set himself to behave towards those whom he employs or those who employ him, towards his domestic servants or his masters, towards railway porters and shop assistants and others who minister to his convenience, as being men and women with the same right to courteous treatment, and to a real opportunity to make the best of themselves, as he has himself; let him thus realize his debts to his nearest neighbors, and the whole idea of humanity, of brotherhood, will be deepened and made real to him. Serving the few, he will come to serve the many, he will get a habit of considerateness and thoughtfulness for others, as belonging to Christ, which will express itself habitually towards all, and especially the weak. His neighbor will come to mean, as in our Lord's parable and in Paul's expression in this place, any "other man" ....

Paul is here plainly reproducing our Lord's saying about love and the law (Matt. 22.40; Gal. 5.14 and James 2.8) and he would seem to have the teaching of the parable about the Good Samaritan in his mind. Here is the center and kernel of Christianity. It is the revelation of a new and universal duty, based on the revealed relationship of all men to a common Father. *Charles Gore,* in *The Epistle to the Romans.*

A Debt of Love Paid. A few years ago, two young men who belonged to influential families in a manufacturing city sat together in a cozy little reading-room, reading the morning papers.

"That mill boy Jones who murdered Saunders, down at the Point, is sentenced to be hanged, I see," said one of them.

"Yes," said his companion.

His friend laid down the paper. "I notice," he said, thoughtfully, "that he had neither father, mother, friend nor comrade to stand near him in the dock."

"No? Well, what of it?" "Perhaps that was the reason he was there."

His friend did not care to follow his meaning, and rose, yawning, to go out. He paid no more attention to the case, except to go out of town on the day of the hanging, that he might hear nothing of it. He always protected himself from pain or trouble.

But his companion kept the thought of the friendless murderer on his mind. There were scores of other mill boys in the town. Had they friends? Did any man care for their souls?

In a quiet way he gathered four or five of them into a class. These he taught to read and write. He learned also to know them and their companions, to look at life from their point of view, to understand their hopes and needs.

He soon succeeded in interesting some of his friends in them, and they established a reading-room, and one or two co-operative societies, temperance clubs and an evening school. In six years he had succeeded in elevating the whole mass of working men in two or three of the mills to a higher level. *Youth's Companion.*

Our Neighbor to whom Love is due. Remember that the sancity of life in the hill villages of Afghanistan, among the winters' snows, is as inviolable in the eyes of Almighty God as can be your own. Remember that He who has united you as human beings in the same flesh and blood has bound you by the law of mutual love; that that mutual love is not limited by the shores of this island, is not limited by the boundaries of Christian civilization; that it passes over the whole earth, and embraces the meanest along with the greatest in its unmeasured scope. *William E. Gladstone.*

II Works of Darkness

Drunkenness not the only Work of Darkness. Paul makes no attempt to catalog all the evils that he would have cast off as works of darkness. In the list, verses 12-14, it seems natural to find drunkenness and impurity and strife especially mentioned. The crimes committed by men under the influence of liquor are the blackest of dark works. What about smoking, would you include it among the works of darkness, or with a play upon words do you say that it is a work of light, then it works no ill to one's neighbor? What about its effects on oneself? Whatever harms one, makes one incapable of doing one's best, or even unfits one for any service, is in truth a work of evil. The portrait of a drunkard given in Proverbs, our last temperance lesson, shows what a sin against self the man commits who becomes intoxicated. It would be easy to paint the portrait of wrecked manhood or womanhood and label it the opium eater or the cigarette fiend. To-day in the Sunday-schools the evil effects of tobacco on the growing youths of the land are being discussed, for whom it is one of the worst of evils.

What Smoking does. Among the properties of tobacco smoke are:

1. Free carbon. It is this that settles on the back of the throat and the bronchial tubes, blackening and irritating them.

2. Ammonia. It is this that causes the dryness of the smoker's tongue and throat, which tempts so many to the use of alcoholic drinks.

3. Carbonic acid, to which are due the headache, lassitude, and sleepiness that follow prolonged smoking.

4. Oil of tobacco. This contains three substances: a volatile one, which causes the disagreeable smell that so clings to the clothing of smokers; a bitter extract, to which is mainly due the nauseous taste of tobacco and its power as an emetic; and nicotine, a powerful poison which gives rise to the tremor, palpitation and paralysis that so often afflict excessive smokers.

All must acknowledge that tobacco is utterly useless to one in a normal state of health; that nature seems to have sought to guard against its use by the intense depression and sickness which it almost invariably causes at first.

But what are its more serious constitutional effects? These differ with the age of the smoker. It is universally admitted that, prior to the full maturity of the system, the smallest amount of smoking is harmful, especially in its action upon the heart. In the case of adults, careful investigators do not find it to be injurious except when used in excess; but it must be remembered that its use, like that of opium and alcohol, always tends to excess. As a rule, the

amount must be steadily increased to secure the effect for which it is used.

The excessive use of tobacco gives rise to disturbance of the stomach, weakness and irritability of the heart, relaxation of the muscles, blurring of the sight, oppression of the brain, "smoker's sore throat," irritation of the bronchial tubes and surfaces of the lungs, and sometimes to paralysis.

Significant but not surprising results followed an inquiry recently made into the type of boy who smokes cigarettes. A record of twenty boys in school who did not smoke and twenty who did was kept for a long period. It was found that of the cigarette smokers nineteen were older than the average in their grade, sixteen had bad manners, the deportment of eighteen and the physical condition of twelve were poor, fourteen were in bad moral and eighteen in bad mental condition; sixteen were street loafers, and nineteen failed of promotion. Of the non-smokers none were street loafers, only two failed of promotion, and in all the other mentioned particulars the record shows no more than two who could be classed with the smokers. Street loafing, bad manners, poor scholarship and cigarette smoking seem to go together. *The Youth's Companion.*

Advice to College Youths. A pipe in the mouth of a youth does not make him look like a college man, or any other kind of man. It merely makes him look absurd, that is all. Tobacco is a wonderful vegetable. It is, I believe, the only substance in the world which is at the same time a stimulant and a narcotic, a heart excitant and a nerve sedative. You are too young yet to need a heart stimulant, too young to need anything to quiet your nerves. If at your tender age your nerves are so inflamed that they must be soothed, and if at the very sunrise of life your heart is so feeble that it must be forced with any stimulant, you would better quit college. College is no place for you if you are such a decadent; yes, and you will find the world a good deal harder than college. Whether a full-grown man shall use tobacco or not is something for himself to decide. Personally I like it so well that I made up my mind a long time ago to give it up altogether. *A. J. Beveridge,* in *The Young Man and the World.*

One Effect of Smoking. I can testify to the bad effects on manners. I have seen many a boy and man, by nature courteous and thoughtful, who would never think of doing an ungentlemanly or rude thing intentionally, guilty nevertheless of the most heedless discourtesy and rudeness in the use of tobacco. Every morning, as I get off the suburban train in the railway station and walk down the crowded platform, I see both men and women dodging to one side or the other in order to escape the necessity of inhaling a cloud of tobacco smoke, blown over his shoulder by some smoker in front who does not mean to be boorish, and who would never think of blowing a cloud of tobacco smoke into the face of anyone whom he was confronting, but who, with no thought whatever of the feelings of others, pollutes the air which they have to breathe. *Robert E. Speer.*

Women Smokers. I can not decide on the medical or moral bearings of the question, but I have noticed that men who use tobacco to excess always speak of themselves as "slaves to the habit," and declare that it is impossible to break from it. I do not see why women who are trying to emancipate themselves from customs which they declare are tyrannies, should voluntarily put on a yoke which men find intolerable. *Alexandria, Queen of England.*

I find that tobacco is used by only three classes of American women: fast young girls in the cities who wish to imitate the manners of a faster set in London; old women in the almshouses whose pipes take the place of a stronger stimulant, and women of the "poor white" class in the South who go about with a stick rubbed in snuff in their mouths. *Monsieur Velpeau.*

III The Armor of Light

The Right Order. Speaking in a figure Paul says, The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. As the night flees before the approach of day, so deeds of darkness flee before the glare of light. When garments are exchanged, one must be put off before the other is put on, hence Paul naturally speaks of casting off the works of darkness first, and then putting on the armor

of light. But evil thoughts are driven out by first filling the mind with good thoughts; promptings to good deeds first gain control of the will and then overcome the promptings to evil deeds. This truth Paul voices when he says, Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh. First be clothed with power from on high and then this power will enable you to cast off the control of the evil one. You can obey the command to put off the works of darkness after you have obeyed the command to put on the armor of light.

A Helpful Comparison. The development of electricity has brought with it a new kind of peril that has set inventors devising anti-electric armor; and recently a coat of mail was fabricated that is effectual against the dangers of high tension electricity. The protection consists in a garment of fine, close brass gauze, which envelops the body and extremities entirely so that the current, if it should pass over the body, will only get as far as the metallic surface, and then be conducted off harmlessly. Thus the occult forces of evil, the temptations which appeal to the mind and heart, are neutralized by the delicate mail, the spiritual armor, which guarantees the salvation of faithful souls. The atmosphere of life is charged with the malign electricities, which work deadly mischief unless we are sheltered from head to foot in the invisible anti-electric armor which Heaven silently and constantly forges about pure-hearted men. *William L. Watkinson,* in *The Duty of Imperial Thinking.*

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an exhortation to know Christ and keep Him ever before one as a pattern, to live in accordance with His spirit and teaching, to follow Him in thought and action. This is impossible, you say? Jesus Christ was the only perfect Man, and therefore He is the only perfect Model. He is also divine, and therefore the heights He reached and kept are unattainable for His followers, but by keeping Him in sight as Guide they may all mount far above the plane on which they are sometimes content to dwell. "There is only one morality; the original of it is in God; the copy of it is in the Man of God." In the art galleries abroad you see artists trying to reproduce on their canvasses the works of the great masters. They look constantly at their models, and though their copies are but poor imitations, they are as like the originals as the hands that wield the brushes can make them. This is what we can do with our lives—live them as nearly in the spirit of that Master Life as it is possible.

Wanted: a Clear View of our Guide. After a heavy fall of snow a group of boys encircled a tree in a field, arranged themselves around it, as the center, like spokes in a wheel, and then each one started out in the direction he was facing. Their object was to see who could make the straightest path. When all had reached the limits of the field and retraced their steps they were greatly surprised to see how far from straight every path was save one. That one was straight as an arrow. How had the boy made it? By fixing his eye on a tall pine tree in the distance and never looking away from it once till he reached the fence, he explained. This is an illustration of what a Christian should do. Like the psalmist he should be able to say, I have set the Lord always before me.

Looking at Jesus. What does it mean practically? It means hearing about Him first, then actually appealing to Him, accepting His word as personal to one's self, putting Him to the test in life, trusting His death to square up one's sin score, trusting His power to clean the heart and sweeten the spirit and stiffen the will. It means holding the whole life up to His ideals. Aye, it means more yet; something on His side, an answering look from Him. There comes a consciousness within of His love and winsomeness. That answering look of His holds us for ever after His willing slaves, love's slaves. Paul speaks of the eyes of the heart. It is with these eyes we look at Him, and receive His answering look. *S. D. Gordon,* in *Quiet Talks on Service.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Love, and God will pay you with the capacity for more love. *F. W. Robertson.*

He who loves best his fellow man
Is loving God the holiest way he can. *Alice Cary.*

Man is an egoist who has need of loving others. *Charles Wagner.*
Duty is the law of which love is the life. *Chinese Saying.*
Spiritual diligence is never off duty. *Bishop Brent.*
The love of our neighbor is the only door out of the dungeon of self. *George Macdonald.*
All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets. Matt. 7.12.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Sleep is defined as a suspension of the action of the faculties. To what are your faculties alive? Are you unconcerned about your evil deeds? Sleepers awake when they really wish to awake.
Let us walk becomingly as in the day.
Love not only does no ill but does much good. Love means service.
It is a great thing, to believe that Jesus Christ is the perfect Pattern of life. It is a greater thing to know and understand that wonderful Example. It is the greatest thing to seek earnestly to imitate His spirit in our own lives. Let us begin a new intimacy with Him, and we shall see that we have been looking at Him with eyes only half awake.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Our lesson consists of two distinct parts: Love is the fulfilment of the law, is the main thought in the first part; salvation is at hand, is the main thought in the second. Paul has been talking about the duty of rendering to all their dues, and he counsels, "Owe no man anything," then as he reflects that there is one debt that is always due and therefore can never be fully discharged, he adds, "save to love one another." He who loves his neighbor fulfils the moral law, obeys the commands against committing adultery, killing, stealing, and coveting, and keeps the commandment which sums up all others, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love works no ill to another, therefore love fulfils the law.
Christ's second coming is nearer than when they first believed, Paul urges, and it is time for them to awake, to put forth all their powers. Night is wearing away, day is beginning to dawn, works becoming the darkness must be cast aside as a garment and armor that befits the day must be worn. Some of the works of darkness are sins of eating and drinking, of impurity, of strife, and jealousy. The source of power to obey this exhortation is Jesus Christ; imitate Him and you will do deeds of light rather than of darkness.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Substitutes for saloons as the working man's clubs.
2. The imitation of Christ in modern life.
3. Total abstinence versus moderation. See "The Fight against Alcohol," in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine,* May, 1908.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Where had Paul been between his attendance at the Council in Jerusalem and his vision at Troas? 2. Where was Asia? Mysia? Troas? 3. In what sense did Paul "pass by" Mysia? 4. Where was Macedonia? 5. Who were with Paul on this journey? (Acts 15.40; 16.3.) 6. Whose presence is indicated by the pronoun "we" in verse 10? (Luke.) 7. What can you learn about Timothy? (See the Subject-Index of the Bible.) 8. In what earlier lesson did we hear of a "call" that came to Paul? (Lesson V, second quarter.) 9. Compare Paul's vision with the vision that came to Cornelius. 10. In what parable did Jesus speak of purple as the attire of the wealthy? (Luke 16.19.) 11. What does Paul say about the women of Philippi in his Epistle to the Philippians, 4.2, 3?

THIRD QUARTER

LESSON I—JULY 4

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY—ANTIOCH TO PHILIPPI

Read Acts 15.36-16.15. Commit verses 9, 10.

Golden Text

Come over into Macedonia, and help us. Acts 16.9.

LESSON TEXT Acts 16.6-15

6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; 8 and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; 12 and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. 13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there.* And she constrained us.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

6. *Having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.* How the prohibition was made known, whether by inward impression, by a vision, by a prophet, by counsel, by events, we are not told.

7. *Over against Mysia.* They were on the borders of Mysia.—*Assayed.* Tried.—*Bithynia.* The first Epistle of Peter is addressed, among others, to the Christians in Bithynia.

8. *And passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.* They "passed by" in the sense of not stopping to preach the word as they crossed Mysia.

10. *We.* Luke is one of the number.

11. *We made a straight course to Samothrace.* "*We ran* (literally) *a straight course* is a nautical term for sailing before the wind" (*Vincent*).

13. Compare Psa. 137.1.

14. *One that worshipped God.* A Jewish proselyte.

15. *Constrained us.* By entreaty. Apparently Luke remained at Philippi seven years (Acts 20.4-6).

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

9. *There was a man of Macedonia standing.* Would you venture to say that it was all just imagination; that, of course, there was no man, no voice? Don't you think that there was something more real than a human shape, speaking

human words to the sleeping apostle, that there was that mighty power which has been called "the urge of God" acting upon a soul ready to obey the divine behest to the uttermost? The form in which that message clothed itself mattered very little; to Paul it was visible, tangible reality, and straightway he made it so. Because he was an idealist, a dreamer, a visionary, he achieved a life-work which has changed the entire course of history, and left its mark upon the world to-day. *J. Warshauer,* in *Pro Rege Nostro.*

10. *We sought to go forth.* How are we to explain the emergence of the personal note just at Troas? Either Luke joined the party there, or we must find some reason for his feeling relatively in the background up to this point. May not his "detachment of attitude" so far (supposing he started with Paul from Antioch, as medical attendant) have been due to his feeling a mere spectator while Paul was traversing old ground or awaiting the call to fresh work (similarly even Silas' presence is not alluded to until 16.4, Paul being till then mainly in the question); whereas he feels himself one of the party indeed from the part when the call to active evangelization comes at Troas? He remembers the thrill which ran through Paul's whole company when 'the call" finally came, after long waiting: and the "we" reflects his emotional sympathy as he writes years after. As to the cessation of the personal note at certain parts (16.40-20.4; 21.19-26.32; 28.17-end), even when we gather from its subsequent use that Luke was actually on the spot (20.16; 21.1, 19; 27.1), the reason is perhaps to be found in the degree to which at times the memory of his own participation was overshadowed by that of Paul's action as absorbing all attention. *J. Vernon Bartlet, The Acts.*

12. *From thence to Philippi.* No one could have guessed that this little advance guard of seven represented a greater kingdom than that which Xerxes represented, though he brought together the armies of forty-six nations to contend against Greece, constructed a canal for his ships to ride upon, and flung a bridge across the Hellespont, over which his soldiers marched incessantly for seven days and nights. A greater republic Paul and his companions represented, too, than that which Brutus and Cassius fought and bled and died for on this very city of Philippi ninety years before. The picture of the magnificent Xerxes seated on his throne of gold, watching the tremendous disaster of the battle of Salamis, fades away with the years; so, also, the glory of the victories of the Roman Augustus; but the King whom Paul came to Europe to herald forth rises still to greater and greater power. *Edgar Whittaker Work,* in *Great Moments in the Life of Paul.*

The victors in the famous Battle at Philippi against Brutus and Cassius: Octavius and Antony on the left; Lepidus on the right

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

12. *The first of the district.* Amphipolis was ranked first by general consent, Philippi first by its own consent. In every province and district there was keen competition for the title first of the province or the district. Every city which could pretend to the first place in respect of any qualification called itself first, and roused the jealousy of other cities which counted themselves equally good. Smyrna was "first of Asia in size and beauty"; Ephesus first of Asia as the landing place of every Roman official; Pergamus first as the official capital, and Sardis boldly styled itself "first metropolis of Asia, of Lydia, of Hellenism" on one of its coins. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Letters to the Seven Churches.*

12. *Philippi, a Roman colony.* In keeping with this both the tone and language of the inscription found on the now deserted site are Latin. Most interesting of these is an *album* (*i. e.* roll) of a *Collegium Cultorum Silvani* or Society of the Worshippers of Silvanus, one of the primitive Latin deities. For it was just as such another society or collegium that the new Christian body would present itself to the citizens—with the difference, that the new collegium was illicit, that is, it had not yet received sanction from the authorities. *R. B. Rackham.*

13. When there was no synagogue, the Jews generally preferred to say their prayers by the water-side, whether of sea or river, for this afforded oppor-

tunity for their ablutions; compare 21.5, and Ezra 8.15.21. Josephus quotes a decree of Halicarnassus allowing the Jews to *make their prayers* (Greek *proseuchas*) *on the sea shore according to the custom of their fathers;* and two hundred years after Christ Tertullian still mentions *orationes litorales* (prayers on the shore) as a characteristic of the Jews. *R. B. Rackham.*

14. *A seller of purple.* Lydia, the Thyatiran woman, settled at Philippi, is an interesting person in many respects. Thyratira, like the Lydian land in general, was famous for its dyeing; and its guild of dyers is known from the inscriptions. Lydia sold the purple dyed garments from Thyatira in Philippi; and she had, no doubt, a regular connection with a firm in her native city, whose agent she was. In ancient times many kinds of garments were woven in their perfect shape; and there was much less cutting and sewing of cloth than at the present day. Lydia, of course, sold also the less expensive kinds of garments; but she takes her trade-name from the finest class of her wares, indicating that she was a first-class dealer. She must have possessed a considerable amount of capital to trade in such articles. As her husband is not mentioned, and she was a householder, she was probably a widow; and she may be taken as an ordinary example of the freedom with which women lived and worked both in Asia Minor and in Macedonia. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *St. Paul the Traveler.*

15. *Her household.* This was due to the great power of the parent or head of the house over his family or household. This authority was a relic of the patriarchal stage of early civilization, and from this we can see that the "*patria potestas*" was still a living reality not only at Rome but throughout the ancient world. Almost as a matter of course the father set the religion for his family of children and servants. *R. B. Rackham.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After the "Council in Jerusalem" Paul and Barnabas remained some time in Antioch of Syria. Then Paul's missionary zeal urged him onward, and he proposed to Barnabas that they revisit the cities where they had preached on their first journey. Barnabas wished to take John Mark with them, but Paul objected, for Mark had left them before when they reached Perga in Pamphylia. Barnabas insisted on his wish, and the two agreed to separate, Barnabas going southwestward with John Mark to Cyprus and Paul with Silas northward through Syria and then westward into Cilicia. We do not hear again of Barnabas, though according to tradition he was very successful as an evangelist.

Paul and Silas probably crossed the Taurus Mountains through the pass known as the Cilician Gates, and came to Derbe and then to Lystra. At Lystra Paul chose Timothy to be his attendant. Strenuously as Paul had objected to a Jewish rite being made the condition of salvation for the Gentiles, he had no objections to Jews themselves observing all their customs, and he induced Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess though his father was a Greek, to be circumcised in order to satisfy the Jews. As they went on their way they reported to the Churches the decision of the Council at Jerusalem. The churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily.

The second missionary journey lasted from 49 to 52 A. D. See the chronology, page 19 of this book.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After leaving Lystra Paul continued his journey westward through South Galatia (the region of Phrygia and Galatia, where was Antioch in Pisidia) until he reached the Roman province of Asia. (According to the older view, the words of Luke "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia" mean that he turned northeastward as far as Ancyra in North Galatia and founded the churches to which he wrote his Epistle to the Galatians. Such a work would have taken several weeks and probably months, and in that case it is strange that Luke does not mention it. The dotted lines on the map, page 262, indicate this route.) Being forbidden to preach in Asia (the Roman province which included the three districts of Mysia, Lydia, and Caria along the

Ægean Sea), and hindered from going northward into Bithynia, they crossed Mysia to Troas.

Troas was on the Ægean Sea near the site of ancient Troy. Here Paul had his vision and call to Macedonia. Here the so-called "Travel Document," or the "We" section, begins, which assumes the presence of Luke. Professor Ramsay thinks that Luke was "the certain man from Macedonia."

In two days' time they sailed from Troas to the island of Samothrace and thence to Neapolis, in Macedonia. Ten miles inland from this port was Philippi.

In crossing from Troas to Philippi, Paul had left the continent of Asia for the continent of Europe. While the province of Asia in Asia Minor and the province of Macedonia in Greece were two provinces of the great Roman Empire, closely united in common language and character and divided from the Latin-speaking provinces farther west, as Professor Ramsay reminds us, yet this journey marked a great advance in the progress of the gospel among the Gentiles, and Luke's way of telling the course taken, and his repetition of the divine guiding, show his appreciation of the importance of the journey.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What part of the Mediterranean Sea did Paul sail over on his first missionary journey? To what island did he go? His second missionary journey, which we now begin, took him over and around the Ægean Sea, and he had a long sea voyage back to Palestine. Luke, our historian, had a special liking for the sea trips. He gives us more interesting particulars about them than he does about the journeys by land, telling us about the time from harbor to harbor, the course, the winds, the appearance of the coasts, etc. This Ægean Sea, a traveler tells us, is "very tempting with its regular winds and regular sunset calm when the water lies dead, with a surface which looks like oil, so dense and glistening and dark that it seems to invite one to walk upon it."

In our last lesson we left Paul at Antioch in Syria, where he had returned after the council in Jerusalem. Turn to your maps and we will follow him from there to the northwestern corner of Asia Minor on the Ægean.

For Older Pupils. We have seen the Christian church established in Palestine and then extended to Asia Minor. We are now to take up its extension to Europe. The years 49 to 54 were most important in Paul's work; during that time he carried out his work in the province of Macedonia and Achaia in Greece and of Asia in Asia Minor. It was to churches he founded in those three provinces that he wrote his epistles to the Thessalonians, to the Philippians, to the Corinthians, to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. It was during this time that he wrote his Epistle to t' Galatians and at its close his Epistle to the Romans.

Of the many incidents that occurred during these years (covering the second and third misssionary journeys), Luke selects a few typical ones that show how Christianity was offered to the Gentiles, and how it came in conflict with the false religions and with the various secular authorities.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Need is the Cry

The Man from Macedonia. Very early into Paul's mind had come the thought that some day he should carry the gospel message even to Rome itself. As he traversed western Asia Minor, where he was divinely prevented from preaching, it may well be that in his perplexity his thoughts reached out to the Roman provinces across the Ægean. As he walked along the harbor of Troas and gazed out over the sea, it may be that he asked himself whether over there were not his next field of labor. And that night he fell asleep with the sound of the Mediterranean waters ringing in his ears, and then he saw a man from that region who told him that over there the people were waiting for him to come and win them for Christ. The vision was God's message to him, and he went at once.

When he landed was he met by men like the one he had seen in his dream? Were the people of Macedonia conscious of their need, longing for his mes-

sage? Who, then, had sent for him? What did the man from Macedonia represent? He represented the great, unconscious need of the Macedonians. It was their need, not their wish, that called Paul. He was not disappointed because he was not received with open arms; he was satisfied with his call because the need was so great.

Other Men from Macedonia. Doctor Wilfred T. Grenfell is one of God's noblemen. He heard the cry of the poor fishermen in Labrador saying, "Come over and help us." He left everything to obey the call. When he reached them they did not know they had sent for him. They were indifferent and apathetic, but great indeed was their need. Soon after reaching Labrador Doctor Grenfell went overland with a dog train to care for the sick. A friend who was helping him started for the same place in a sailing boat. It was almost dark when Doctor Grenfell reached the place, and he was greatly surprised not to find his friend already there. He asked the natives if they had seen anything of a boat. Yes, there had been one not far away at noon. Did it seem in distress? he asked. Well, perhaps it was, they had heard a man shout, but perhaps he was only fishing. Doctor Grenfell started out in a boat and succeeded in rescuing his friend, whose rigging had broken and who was almost spent in his efforts to reach the land. These "men of Macedinia" had had no interest in the man whom their need had sent for, they had given themselves no concern lest the one who was coming to help them should lose his life in the effort.

"The Macedonian man represents a large population," said Dr. Poseph Parker. "If the Church could have its eyes opened to-day, it would see every unevangelized country and every land in sore strait or difficulty typified in this Macedonian man. From every land 'they call us to deliver their souls from error's chains.' "

In that wonderful parable "the certain man" who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers on the way, was left "half dead" by the roadside. It was his need that called to the passers-by for help. It was the Samaritan who answered the cry and fulfilled Christ's command to "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Our word *neighbor* means, according to its derivation, *near-dweller*, but according to Christ's use, our neighbor is one who needs us, and our nearest neighbor is our neediest neighbor, whether so near that we pass him by on the street or so far that we can only learn of his needs through others.

II The Talent is the Call

Noblesse Oblige. When Paul had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, says Luke, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them. The call comes to the susceptible heart. There are multitudes in whose hearts the voice of God can find no hearing. It is only an occasional Samuel who hears the call of God and answers, Here am I, Lord.

At Antioch in Syria there were many prophets and teachers; six of them are named; two are especially called. The Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them (Acts 13.2). The call was to them because they were especially fitted for the work. Among all the followers of Christ there was no one whose talents and training and temper called him to the work as did Paul's. Such openmindedness, such zeal, such whole-hearted devotion, such untiring labor, combined with such mental and spiritual gifts as were his, made him the one man in all the Roman realm who could carry the message of Christ's life and death to its "uttermost parts."

Men are not alike; in their talents they are not created equal. We are often told that wealth is a stewardship, that those who have must share with those who have not. We do not so often hear the equally true fact that talent is a stewardship, that those who have been highly favored by mental endowment or by opportunity for developing whatever power they have are in a position of responsibility as regards those less favored by nature or by advantage. They have some purpose of God to fulfil, some call of His to obey, that shall result in good to others.

The Bonded Life. Our Government requires revenues or duties to be paid on certain articles; until such duties are paid the articles themselves are bonded

—pledged as securities for the revenues. The Government demand is ever on them until the revenues are realized. In just this sense count yourselves under bond. You are favored by sufficient mental endowment to learn; by having parents who approve your mental training; by living in a State and a community that is willing to pay a large sum to start you on the scholar's path; by being exempt from that poverty which must make the next meal the only thought. You are favored to be our bonded men and women, who are to ever yield revenues to all worthy human interests, favored because you have had some better training than others to fit nobly into the rank and file of the world's workers. The high calling of service is upon you. *Reuben H. Hartley,* in an address to High School Scholars.

Opportunities are Calls. "It's very noble in you, Elsie, to give so much of your time to that work among the tenement house children. I'm sure I admire you for it; but for my part I never had any call to that kind of work."

"Any call?" Elsie's eyes were gravely questioning.

"Yes, of course, I suppose you felt called to go into it, didn't you?"

"I don't know. I don't think I ever thought of it just that way. I saw the need of something that I had time and strength to do, that was all. But wouldn't that be call enough?"

Would it not indeed? What plainer call can there be than a need that we can meet? Let us find in "the duty that lies nearest" our present definite call, sure that when we are wanted for another work, that, too, will be shown us. Opportunity—that is God's clear call to us. *Young People.*

III Missionary Topic Did it Pay?

The Vision seemingly Contradicted. In his vision Paul had seen a man from Macedonia standing before him, his hands outstretched appealingly, beseeching him to come into Macedonia. When he reached Philippi, one of the chief cities of Macedonia, where was the man? What did Paul find? Without the city gate, by the river side, he found a prayer-meeting, "a typical prayer-meeting, too, quite like a modern one," some one has said, "for there were none but women there." In Philippi there were the soothsayers who persuaded the "multitude" to rise up against him, and there were multitudes of indifferent people. Only a few men and women, Lydia and her household and the jailer and his household and "the brethren," were won for Christ at this time. Might not Paul have been excusable in thinking he had mistaken the vision, that he had really not been called at all to Macedonia? If we turn to his letter to the Philippians we find no discouraged note; it is, on the contrary, a joyous letter, full of thanksgiving. The modest beginning he did not despise; the ultimately great result he did not question, for he was working with God. The church at Philippi was the first Christian church in Europe. What have been the results in Europe and in the United States and throughout the world that have come from that and other small beginnings made by Paul on the European Continent?

We sow, Others reap. "'What is the good of it all?' quoth little Peterkin." What is the good of missionary work? is often asked. The results at best are meager compared with the vastness of the work. Does it pay? It is right to ask the question. Mission work, like every other kind of work, should be made to pay, only we should be sure what is the return we seek.

Think of Livingstone's work in Africa and its results. Livingstone had three objects which he wished to see accomplished there: trade with the interior opened up, slave trade abolished, and mission work established. When he died, commerce, except in slaves, had not begun, the slave trade was more prosperous than ever, and the missions which he established failed. "The faith of Livingstone only grew deeper as he worked," says Mr. Madsen in the *India Christian Endeavor.* "Could we have been by his side during his last lonely wanderings and asked him, What do you hear? though in reality he heard only the wild orgies of heathen festivals and the groans of miserable slaves that were being carried away, he would have said, I hear the songs of triumph of African Christians, assembling in places of worship, round about; I hear the peals of indignation against the slave trade sounding and reverberating from nation to nation. The fact that he crowned his labours with his death in the heart of Africa, and that faithful sons of the land carried his lifeless body over one

thousand miles to the coast, we believe, did more to rouse the nations to a sense of their duty than if he had survived that last journey."

Thirty years ago Uganda, on the north shore of the Victoria Nyanza, was one of the darkest regions in all Africa. About twenty years ago King Mwanga burned his subjects who dared learn to read. The translation of the Bible into their language was not completed till 1897. Now there are fifty thousand natives who can read and write, there are over a thousand churches among them, and over four thousand of them are Christians, including Catholics as well as Protestants. The returns in Africa have been long in coming, but they have been exceedingly great.

Who will make it pay. Not only is the command for missionary work God's, but the power is His also. The task is indeed appalling; but upon the other side are the resources of the Infinite. Put China with her countless millions, equalling the numbers in the United States and Europe combined, upon one side of the scale; recall that it has taken ninety-five generations of Christian workers, nineteen hundred years of time, millions upon millions of lives and billions upon billions of dollars, to bring Europe and America up to the point of civilization which we have thus far reached; throw into the scale in which China rests India, Africa, Japan, and the islands of the sea; raise the number of the unevangelized from four hundred millions up to nine hundred millions, and face the whole world-problem on its quantitative side at once; remember, further, that we cannot separate evangelization from Christianization, that God will not let us rest even when we have carried the message of salvation to the last human being on earth, but that we must help transform the kingdoms of the world into the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, and thus face the whole world-problem on its qualitative side at once. Now, put upon the other side of the scales, not our finite resources but the infinite resources of Almighty God, and if your soul has faith to catch the vision of the unseen, you will say: "Those that are for us are more than they that be against us." It is only as the problem drives us to God; it is only as the church hides in Him, seeks from Him wisdom and grace and power for the task, that there is the slightest hope of success. On the other hand, if we seek for the divine resources placed at our command, if we avail ourselves of the power of prayer, of the indwelling of the Spirit, of the consecration of men and women and money which the Holy Spirit will inspire, and above all, if we remember that He goes before us and will be with us even unto the end of the world, and that our task is not to conquer nine hundred millions for Christ or even a single soul, but simply to obey Christ and let Him make the conquest, then the task becomes an exceedingly simple one. *J. W. Bashford,* in *God's Missionary Plan for the World.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

God needs every man for some plan. *S. D. Gordon.*

God calls us through ability. *Gail Hamilton.*

To know the need should prompt the deed. *Mary Lyon.*

What to others are disappointments are to believers intimations of the way and will of God. *John Newton.*

Boys and girls must keep their ears open and their hearts open to hear what God has to say to them, to see what He has done for them, and to find out where they can lend a hand. *Edward Everett Hale.*

> And evermore, beneath the outward sense,
> He felt the common sequence of events,
> He felt the guiding hand of Providence
> Reach out of space. A Voice spake in his ear,
> And lo! All other voices far and near
> Died at that whisper, full of meanings clear. *Whittier.*

High hearts are never long without hearing some new call, some distant clarion of God, even in their dreams; and soon they are observed to break up the camp of ease and start on some fresh march of faithful service. *Martineau.*

There are men, women, and children calling all over the land for "help," and we put our fingers in our ears and go home and say, "Behold, we know it

not: Christianity is "help" or it is nothing—active service, co-operation, sympathy, a common sacrifice for a common good. *Joseph Parker.*

Forget not to show love unto strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Heb. 13.2.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

What are we doing to answer the needs that cry unto us? Dr. Grenfell told about the apathy of the people of Labrador when first he went among them, and then said to the people to whom he was lecturing: "You think the attitude of the fishermen of Labrador strange, unnatural, but what of your attitude toward these children of Labrador who now cry to you? Will you continue to sit at ease in your luxurious homes and turn a deaf ear to these unfortunate ones drifting into deep waters?"

Christianity means service. "Straightway we sought to go forth" should be the effect upon us of every Macedonian call of need.

"The Macedonians must have found the gospel very precious which came to them in answer to a need they did not know themselves," says Bishop Phillips Brooks. "And so your needs have stood, are standing now, before God. They have moved Him to deep pity and care for you. And He has sent the supply for them before you knew you wanted it. And here it is—a God to worship, a Saviour to believe in, a Comforter to rest upon."

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Paul started out on his second missionary journey to revisit the churches which he had established in Asia Minor. After going through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia, he was made aware in some way that it was not the will of God that he should preach in the province of Asia on the west. Going northward to the border of Mysia, he determined to go northward into Bithynia, but was again divinely prevented. Perplexed in mind, he passed through Mysia without preaching and stopped at Troas. There in a vision at night he saw a man from Macedonia standing before him, urging him to come over into Macedonia and help them. This, then, was God's plan for him. At once, obedient to the vision, he made arrangements for the journey. In two days' time he and his company sailed from Troas to the isle of Samothrace and thence to Neapolis, and then on foot ten miles inland to Philippi.

In his walks about the city he had seen what he took to be a place of prayer by the river side, and on the first Sabbath day, there being no synagogue in Philippi, he went and taught the women who were assembled there. Among those who were impressed by his teaching was Lydia, a householder and purple cloth merchant. She and her household accepted the new faith and were baptized. The baptism proved that they had found her faithful to the Lord, she said, and she craved the pleasure of ministering to His messengers. At her urgent entreaty Paul and the others made her house their home, and it became the headquarters of the first church in Europe (verse 40).

SUBJECT FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

Mere darkness is an appeal for light. *Bishop Phillips Brooks.* See Chapters I and IX of "God's Missionary Plan for the World," by *Bishop J. W. Bashford.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What events at Philippi are narrated in the Acts? 2. What can you learn about the character of the Church there from Paul's letter to the Philippians? 3. With what feelings did Paul remember them, as expressed in Phil. 1.3-5? 4. Why were Paul and Silas in prison? 5. Why did the jailor wish to kill himself? 6. When Peter escaped from prison, what was done to the prison guards? (Acts 12.19.) 7. What did Paul say in his letter to the Philippians was the final result of his sufferings for Christ? (Phil. 1.12-14.)

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY—THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR

Read Acts 16.16-40. Commit verses 29-31.

Golden Text

Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. Acts 16.31.

LESSON TEXT Acts 16.25-40

25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the jailor, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. 32 And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. 34 And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.

35 But when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. 36 And the jailor reported the words to Paul, *saying*, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore come forth, and go in peace. 37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out. 38 And the serjeants reported these words unto the magistrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans; 39 and they came and besought them; and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city. 40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

25. *About midnight.* "Night was the usual time for Christian worship, as we shall see at Troas (Acts 20.7), and perhaps these midnight 'lauds' represent the apostles' customary practice. See Psa. 119.62" (*Rackham*).

26. *Prison-house.* See verses 23 and 24. It is supposed that the prison was excavated in a rock, hence there was no building to fall on the prisoners' heads.

27. Compare Acts 12.19. The jailor was perhaps a centurion like Cornelius at Cæsarea.

30. *And brought them out.* From the inner to the outer prison, or into the courtyard.—*What must I do to be saved?* He had heard, no doubt, about the words of the soothsaying maid, verse 17.

31. *Jesus.* "The Jewish title of the *Christ* (King James' Version) would not have been very intelligible to the jailor, and is omitted here by the best manuscripts" (*Rackham*).

35. *The magistrates.* See verses 20-23.—*Serjeants.* R. V. M., Greek, *lictors.* Those who had beaten Paul and Silas, verse 22.—*Let those men go.* The nat-

ural inference is, that, like the jailor, they connected the earthquake with the "servants of the Most High God."

39. *And when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city.* In the Bezan text it reads: and they came with many friends unto the prison, and besought them to go forth, saying, We were ignorant of the truth about you, that you are righteous men. And they led them out and besought them, saying, From out this city depart ye, lest the mob gather again before us, shouting out against you.

40. *They departed.* Not *we.* Luke remained, and we do not meet the pronoun *we* again until Acts 20.5.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

27. *The jailor was about to kill himself.* Philippi is famous in the annals of suicide. Here Cassius, unable to survive defeat, covered his face in the empty tent, and ordered his freedmen to strike the blow. His messenger Titinius held it to be "a Roman's part" to follow the stern example. Here Brutus bade adieu to his friends, exclaiming, "Certainly we must fly, yet not with the feet, but with the hands"; and many, whose names have never reached us, ended their last struggle for the republic by self-inflicted death. Here another despairing man would have committed the same crime, had not his hand been arrested by the apostle's voice. *Conybeare and Howson,* in *Life of Paul.*

28. *Do thyself no harm.* It was midnight, and the jailor had to call for lights; how could Paul from the inner prison see that the jailor was going to kill himself? We must understand that the inner prison was a small cell, which had no window and no opening except into the outer and larger prison, and that the outer prison had one large door in the opposite wall; then, if there was any faint starlight in the sky, still more if the moon was up, a person in the outer doorway would be distinguishable to one whose eyes were accustomed to the darkness, but the jailor would see only black darkness in the prison. *William M. Ramsay,* in *St. Paul the Traveller.*

40. *They departed.* Two of the apostolic company remained behind. Timotheus, of whom the Philippians learned that he was truly like-minded with Paul, "serving him in the Gospel as a son serves his father" (Phil. 2.19-25); and "Luke the Evangelist, whose praise is in the Gospel," though he never praises himself, or relates his own labors, and though we only trace his movements in connection with St. Paul by the change of a pronoun or the unconscious variation of his style. *Conybeare and Howson,* in *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul.*

37. *Let them come themselves and bring us out.* Those were brave words because it took a strong man to send back such an answer to magistrates who had treated him so outrageously only the day before. They were wise words, for they give us an apostle's interpretation of our Lord's language in the Sermon on the Mount concerning the non-resistance of evil, and show us that in St. Paul's estimation Christ's law did not bind a man to tolerate foul unjustice. Toleration of injustice is unfair and uncharitable towards others if it can be lawfully redressed or at least apologized for. It is a Christian man's duty to bring public evil-doers and tyrants, instruments of righteousness like these *Duumvirs* of Philippi, to their senses, not for his own sake, but in order that he may prevent the exercise of similar cruelties against his weaker brethren. We may be sure the spirited action of St. Paul, compelling these provincial magnates to humble themselves before the despised strangers, must have had a very wholesome effect in restraining them from similar violence during the rest of their term of office. *G. T. Stokes,* in *Expositor's Bible.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

26. *All the doors were opened and every one's bands were loosed.* Any one that has seen a Turkish prison will not wonder that the doors were thrown open: each door was merely closed by a bar, and the earthquake, as it passed along the ground, forced the doorposts apart from each other so that the bar slipped from its hold, and the door swung open. The prisoners were fastened to the wall or in wooden stocks (verse 24); and the chains and stocks were

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detached from the wall, which was shaken so that spaces gaped between the stones. An earthquake behaves sometimes like a playful, good-natured sprite, when it spares it full terrors. *William M. Ramsay,* in *St. Paul the Traveller.*

27. *The jailor was about to kill himself.* He was responsible for his prisoners, and disgrace and death would have been his punishment had they escaped. Suicide under such circumstances was regarded as a Roman virtue.

35. *The sergeants.* These were the *lictors,* the Roman officials who preceded the magistrates in public, and cleared the way for them. It was their duty to execute the punishment meted out to prisoners; they had beaten Paul and Silas the day before. Their badge of office was the fasces, an ax bound in a bundle of rods, and carried on the left shoulder.

37. *They have beaten us, men that are Romans.* "It is a misdeed to bind a Roman citizen—a crime to scourge him—almost parricide to put him to death," said Cicero. "In the most distant lands, even among barbarians, that cry (*Civis Romanus sum*—I am a Roman citizen) has often brought succor and safety."

38. *The magistrates feared when they heard that they were Romans.* About this time the city of Rhodes was deprived of its freedom by Claudius, because there certain Roman citizens were put to death. The authorities do not question the truth of Paul's statement; a false claim might be punished with death.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Of the work at Philippi, of Paul's message to the Philippians, of the converts made, of Timothy's zeal, who served with Paul as a son with a father in furthering the gospel, of Silas and Luke and Clement and Epaphroditus, of Euodia and Syntyche, those women whom Paul remembers gratefully for their labors, —of all these we get glimpses in Paul's letter to the Philippians, but of this Luke tells us nothing; instead he hastens on to narrate the event which led to Paul's expulsion from the city.

For many days a "maid having a spirit of divination" followed Paul and his company about the streets of Philippi, crying after them "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation." In the margin of the Revised Version this translation is given: *a maid having a spirit, a Python.* The great dragon at Delphi slain by Apollo was called a Python, and according to Plutarch a ventriloquist was called a python in his time. Dr. Ramsay says that "God the Highest" was a wide-spread pagan expression, and "salvation" was the object of many vows and prayers to that and other gods. He further says that the slave girl's mind became distorted and diseased by her belief in her supernatural possession, but it became all the more acute in certain perceptions and intuitions, and she became at once alive to the moral influence which the intense faith of the strangers gave them. Paul in the name of Jesus Christ bade the spirit leave her. "She lost her faith in herself and with it her power." When the men who owned her, to whom her strange powers had brought great gain, found that she could no longer speak as formerly and the people no longer believed in her, they sought revenge for their loss. They seized Paul and Silas and brought them before the magistrates of the city, accusing them as Jews of setting forth customs not lawful for Romans to observe. (The Romans who accepted Paul's message would be turned from their idol worship and their worship of the Emperor.) The multitude sided with the slave owners, and the magistrates ordered Paul and Silas scourged. The lictors carried out the command, and handed the prisoners over to the charge of the jailor, who put them in the close inner prison where there were other prisoners. He also fastened their feet in stocks, and this caused severe pain.

Scourging a Slave

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is at Philippi, first in the prison and then in the jailor's house.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In an old prison in England, in a close underground cell, a man of refinement was once kept for twenty-four hours. The terrible silence and darkness, peopled by his fancy with hideous shapes, almost paralyzed him with fear. He felt that he was losing his reason. Then he heard footsteps overhead, and the chaplain's voice calling him by name. "I am here," the chaplain said, "and I shall not leave until you are freed." "Oh, I shall not mind it at all, now, with you so near," gratefully answered the prisoner. He could not see his friend, but he knew he was there, and the thought kept him calm throughout the long hours.

Paul and Silas are in a black, stifling inner prison at Philippi. It is midnight, but they are praying and singing hymns unto God. Their backs are cut with blows they have received, and their feet are firmly fastened in blocks of wood, but they are singing happily, for they are aware of the unseen presence of one who said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

In our lesson of last Sunday Paul and Silas were by the river-side, talking to the women who had met there for prayer. What has happened to change that peaceful scene to the gloomy prison?

For Older Pupils. Tom Sexton was a "Blacksmith Evangelist" in the South, an ignorant man whose genuine religious experience, told over and over in the crudest language, led many, even learned doctors and lawyers, to seek and find the same Father. This is the way Tom Saxton in one of his meetings described the scene with which our lesson text begins: "I can just imagine Paul and Silas there with their feet in the stocks and their backs all cut up and bleeding, and everything looking like it was against them, death seeming to be in front of them; and Paul says, 'Strike up a hymn, Silas.' But Silas says, 'My back's hurting me so, and they've got the stocks round my feet so tight that I can't sing.' Then Paul says, 'Well, we've got to have a hymn, if I start it up myself.'" "I don't know what hymn Paul started up," continued the blacksmith, "but I believe if they knew this hymn, it would be this:

'Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for ev'ry one,
And there's a cross for me.'"

The blacksmith's grammar was wrong, but his thought was right. Paul's cross was always nobly borne, and it was in the cross of Christ that he glorified.

Paul's life at Philippi was free from persecution by the Jews, and to the church which he established he was especially attached, as his Epistle to the Philippians shows. From whom did his persecution come?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Perfect Peace

An Explanation of the Songs in the Night. "Migratory birds invisible to the eye have been detected by the telescope crossing the disc of the sun six miles above the earth. They have found one of the secret places of the Most High, far above the earth, invisible to the human eye, hidden in the light, they were delightfully safe from fear of evil. Thus it is with the soul that soars into the heavenly places; no arrow can reach it, no fowler betray it, no creature of prey make it afraid, it abides in the shadow of the Almighty." These words of Dr. W. L. Watkinson in "The Duty of Imperial Thinking" explain the serenity and joy of Paul and Silas in that prison in Philippi. In thought they abode in the shadow of the Almighty, and from that vantage ground of peace and joy their spirits triumphed over all the wretchedness and agony they were suffering.

A Christian's Privilege. Multitudes of Christians have proved that it is possible to rise above any trouble, however overwhelming, into a realm of

peace and tranquility. They have not evaded nor minimized the trouble, they have simply transcended it.

> And I smiled to think God's greatness
> Flows around our incompleteness
> Round our restlessness His rest,

sings Mrs. Browning.

You have crossed a river in winter time, and have heard the great cakes of ice grinding against the sides of your ferry boat, but what mattered it to the pilot how much paint was worn off or how many dents were made as long as the engine and all the machinery were working aright, and he was guiding the boat in safety to the other side? One's life may seem to be battered and bruised by the obstacles in its pathway, but there may be perfect peace in one's soul if the heart is right toward God, if the trend of the life is right, and the haven secure.

How to obtain Peace. Young people think of peace as a cessation from activity, as a good that belongs to white hairs and folded hands. The true meaning of peace and how it may be ours Dr. J. H. Jowett explains in these words:

"Peace" is a word which is most grievously misunderstood. Peace is not the stillness of death, nor is it found in the silent stagnancy of the mountain tarn. Peace is life, it is motion, it is movement without friction. We may find its fitting symbol in some great engine house, when the monster is at work, and every part co-operates with every other part in smooth and perfect communion. Peace is not found when every instrument in the orchestra is silent, but when every instrument is making its own contribution, and the result is rich and perfect harmony. Peace is found in the absence of discord, peace is found when every bit of grit is removed from the wheels, when one force works with another force in sweet and unbroken fellowship.

It is, therefore, very suggestive that the root of the word, which in the New Testament is translated "peace," has the significance of "to join." A "joining" is taking place, and what is it but an adjustment between the soul and God? Man and his Lord are fitted together, and become one, and this communion is the innermost secret of peace.

If we live in the mood of prayer, if it be our constant frame of mind, if, instead of worrying about our needs, we habitually present them to the Lord in truthful supplication, and if, in all our communion there sounds the gladsome note of thankful praise, we shall most assuredly be kept and sustained in "the peace of God."

II The Greatest Question

The Question and its Answer. Greatly frightened by the earthquake, and in the revulsion of feeling that came when his life, which he thought forfeited by the escape of his prisoners, was spared, the jailor rushed into the prison and fell down at the feet of Paul crying out, "What must I do to be saved?" He probably thought the earthquake sent by Paul's God to defend Paul, and he wished to escape that God's punishment for cruelty to His messenger; he had, moreover, heard of Paul's preaching a way of salvation, and the exciting occurrences of the night may have aroused in him a dim sense of spiritual need. His question is the greatest of all questions, but probably he did not at first realize its full import, and Paul gave him the simplest of all answers, but we must not make the mistake of not realizing the full import of that answer. The jailor knew nothing about God; Paul told him to believe on the Lord Jesus and he should be saved, then Paul "spoke the word of the Lord unto him." Before he could believe on Jesus or could rely on Him, the jailor must learn who Jesus is, what He has done for mankind, and what relying on Him involves.

In our third lesson in the Acts this year, we read about the Jews who, after Peter's sermon at Pentecost, "were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren what shall we do?" These Jews knew about Jesus, they knew how they had rejected Him, Peter's words had aroused their guilty consciences, and they asked their question with far greater

understanding than did the pagan jailor. How did Peter answer? "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Paul's answer to the jailor involved as much as Peter's answer to the Jews. The jailor could not believe on Jesus, rely on Him, without repentance and submission. Faith and love and obedience are sides of the same prism, as George Macdonald has said, and no one can rightly believe on the Lord Jesus without loving and obeying Him.

What Man can not do for his Salvation. Man can not save himself. God never does anything for us that we can do for ourselves. He never gave a system of philosophy. The universe is before us, and we are left to our intelligence to frame a reasonable explanation of it. He never gave us a system of government. We were left to discern by reflection and experience the laws which determine human welfare. He never gave us a system of science. We were left to puzzle out for ourselves the problems of nature. What we are capable of doing God leaves us to do, although we may serve a long apprenticeship of thought and suffering before we attain the necessary proficiency. But we could not save ourselves, and therefore God has stepped in to deliver us by a mighty act of extraordinary grace. He has acted in the moral kingdom as He does not in the intellectual and social development of the race, the reason being that we have a natural power adequate to the situation, but not a moral power. The Incarnation was the stoop of God to do for mankind what it could not do for itself. *W. L. Watkinson,* in *The Duty of Imperial Thinking.*

What Man must do for his Salvation. Man is not a passive agent in the work of salvation. Passivity leads to loss, not gain of salvation. This is impressively shown by a card used by an evangelist; on one side of the card is printed the question: "What must I do to be saved?" and after it a number of Scripture texts pointing out the way of salvation, while on the other side is printed another question, "What must I do to be lost?" and after it the simple word "Nothing." Paul's answer doubtless sounded very easy to the jailor, but accepting it involved a revolution in his life.

God who made you without you, and redeemed you without you, will not save you without you, said St. Augustine. The redemption has been wrought for you, but it is not yours unless you accept it, and you have not accepted the sacrifice of the Redeemer unless you are loyal to His commands. To use the words of another, If the life of Christ be not your pattern, the death of Christ will never be your pardon.

III Missionary Topic In Bondage

Bound by Cords of Sin. Paul and Silas were in the inner prison, their feet made fast in the stocks, but they were not in such bondage as was their heathen jailor before he asked his great question. "Therefore my people are gone into captivity," cried out the prophet Isaiah, while yet his people were living in freedom on their own soil. They had sinned, they were moral captives, he who sins goes into bondage, was his thought.

A missionary visited a noted drunkard and tried to persuade him to give up his drinking, but the man said he could not, it was too late for him to reform. Then he took a coil of rope and wound it round and round his boy who was sitting in a chair, over and under the chair itself, till the boy was securely fastened. "Can that boy get away?" the father then asked the missionary, and received the answer, "He can not." "Well," he continued, "I am bound hand and foot in sin as that boy is with the rope. I can not get away."

> His own iniquities shall take the wicked,
> And he shall be holden with the cords of his sin.

In Cruel Bondage. Seven years a widow, yet only eleven years old! The shadow—nay, the curse of widowhood has hung over little Sita ever since she remembered anything.

She had gone, as usual, in her tattered garments, with three large brass water pots on her head, to the great open well from which she drew the daily

supply of water for a family of nine. She was so tired, and her frail little back ached so pitifully, that she sat down on a huge stone to rest a minute.

A woman so poor that she must draw her own drinking water but still a Brahmin, came near, and to her Sita appealed for help:

"Will you not draw out a little water for me? I am ill and tired and the well is very deep."

The woman turned angrily and uttered in a scathing tone the one word, "Widow!" Then she burst out: "Curse you, how dare you come between me and the glorious sun? Your shadow has fallen upon me and I'll have to take the bath of purification before I can eat food! Curse you, stand aside! Didn't you have a husband once?"

"Yes, I think so," Sita answered, "an old, bad man who used to shake me and tell me to grow up quickly to work for him. Perhaps he was my husband. When he died they said I killed him, but I did not. I was glad he was dead though," added the sad little thing.

"So you call him bad?" the woman cried. "Ah! no wonder the gods hate you. No doubt you were very wicked ages and ages ago, and so now you are made a widow. By and by you will be born a snake or a toad," and gathering up her water pots, she went away.

The slender, ill-fed child hurriedly filled the brass vessels, knowing that abuse awaited her late return. Raising the huge jars to her head, she hastened to her house—a home she never knew. The sister-in-law met the little thing with violent abuse, and bade her prepare the morning meal. The child was ill and nearly fell with fatigue. "I'll show you how to wake up," the woman cried, and seizing a hot poker she laid it on the arms and hands of the child. Screaming with pain, the poor little creature worked on, trembling if the sister-in-law even looked her way.

This was one day. Each of the seven long years contained three hundred and sixty-five days, and now they were growing worse. The last year, in token of the deep disgrace of widowhood, the child's soft dark tresses had been shaved off, and her head left bare. When that has been done, but one meal a day is permitted a widow no matter how hard she works. Condensed from *Mosaics from India*, by *Margaret B. Deming.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Only the life that has learned to trust has found the secret of real peace. *Malcolm J. McLeod.*

A man has only as much religion as he can command in time of trouble. *Andrew Fuller.*

Their legs in the stocks pained them not, whose souls were in heaven. *Tertullian.*

The bullet will hit the mark which is first dipped in the marksman's blood. *Emerson.*

It is not relation to a system that makes a man a Christian, but relation to the Saviour. *Robert F. Coyle.*

Faith in Christ is faith in Him as the way unto the Father. *Henry Goodwin Smith.*

I know much less about the atonement than I knew ten years ago; but I know that Christ came to save and that He does save. *G. Campbell Morgan.*

Just as brave birds mount above the tempest into the blue heavens and golden sunshine, so the devout soul in faith and prayer, in hallowed thought and feeling, wings its way into the calm azure of the heaven of heavens until the storms are overpast and gone. *W. L. Waltkinson.*

I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. Phil. 4.11.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Isa. 26.3.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Where now are the joyous Christians, the midnight singing Christians? questions Dr. Parker. We are not now beaten and imprisoned for our faith. Do we meet the unusual, the uncomfortable, with songs or with complaints?

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR

Take from our souls the strain and stress
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace. *Whittier.*

A wise question is already half the answer, said Francis Bacon. Have you asked the wisest—because most important—of all questions?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

See the Historical Background. At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns in their inner prison, and the other prisoners were listening, when suddenly a great earthquake shook the foundations where they were, opened the prison doors, and loosed the prisoners' bands. The affrighted jailor, suddenly aroused from sleep, found the outer door open and supposed his prisoners had escaped. Preferring death at his own hands to the disgrace and punishment that would be his, he drew his sword to kill himself. "We are all here," quickly called out Paul, who from the dark interior had seen his purpose. Ordering the lights to be brought, the jailor, still trembling with fear, sprang in and fell down in reverence before Paul and Silas. After taking them out into the courtyard he asked the greatest of all questions, "What must I do to be saved?" For him the earthquake had been a messenger of God, avenging His ministers and proving the truth of their message to the people of Philippi. Paul gave the simplest of all answers, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and then, tired and sorely wounded as he was, he explained to him and those with him about Jesus the Messiah. At the prison fountain or reservoir the jailor cleansed them from the blood caused by their stripes, and they baptized him and his household. The jailor then took them into his house and gave them food.

As soon as day dawned the jailor came and told Paul that he was free to go, for the magistrates had sent word to release him. But Paul indignantly exclaimed, "Let them come themselves and bring us out." They had been publicly beaten, they will not be privately released: they have been punished uncondemned, they will not be sent away unacquitted. Moreover, they were Roman citizens, and the magistrates had caused them to be beaten and cast into prison. Like the jailor, the magistrates had connected the earthquake with the prisoners and were alarmed at the course they had taken, but when they were told that these men were Roman citizens they knew that their violation of the law rendered them liable to death. Humbly they came and besought them eagerly to leave the city. Thus, not as fugitives from justice, but as publicly acquitted, Paul and Silas left the prison, and after tarrying awhile with the church at Lydia's home they left the city.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Suicide. See "No Exit," in *The Outlook,* Feb. 1, 1908.
2. The duty of resisting lawless officials.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Review Paul's discourse to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, Acts 13.16-42; what part of this longer reported discourse was probably repeated at Thessalonica? 2. Why did Paul always refer to the sufferings of Jesus when speaking to the Jews? 3. Which gospel constantly refers to the Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus? (Matthew.) 4. With the charge in verse 7, compare the argument used by the Jews before Pilate, John 19.12. 5. When before have you heard of Jews following Paul from one city to another to stir up trouble against him? 6. What did the Philippians do for Paul while at Thessalonica? (Phil. 4.16.) 7. Read the two epistles to the Thessalonicans.

LESSON III—JULY 18

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY—THESSALONICA AND BEREA

Read Acts 17.1-15. Commit verse 11.

Golden Text

Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. Psalm 119.11.

LESSON TEXT Acts 17.1-15

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came
to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 and Paul, as his custom
was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from
the scriptures, 3 opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and
to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, *said he,* I proclaim
unto you, is the Christ. 4 And some of them were persuaded, and consorted
with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the
chief women not a few. 5 But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took
unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city
on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them
forth to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and
certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned
the world upside down are come hither also; 7 whom Jason hath received: and
these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king,
one Jesus. 8 And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city,
when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security from
Jason and the rest, they let them go.
10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto
Berœa: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the
Jews. 11 Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they
received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily,
whether these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed; also of the
Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few. 13 But when the
Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed of
Paul at Berœa also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the
multitudes. 14 And then immediately the brethren set forth Paul to go as far
as to the sea: and Silas and Timothy abode there still. 15 But they that
conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens: and receiving a commandment
unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed, they de-
parted.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1, 2. *They.* Acts 15.40; 16.1, 3.—*Sabbath.* Margin, *weeks.—Reasoned with them from the scriptures.* He cited scripture passages prophetic of the Christ: he then showed that Jesus fulfilled these words, and thus reasoned or argued that Jesus is the Christ, verse 3.

3. *Opening.* He opened the scriptures, (as Jesus did on the walk to Emmaus, Luke 27.32) by alleging *i. e.* bringing forward as evidence, (the original meaning of this verb) the agreement of Jesus' life with the passages quoted.

4. *Some of them.* Some of the Jews.—*Consorted.* From *con,* with, and, *sors,* lot, fate. They cast their lot with Paul and Silas, shared their way of life.—

MODERN SALONICA (THE ANCIENT THESSALONICA)

Devout Greeks. Jewish proselytes. The Gentiles are mentioned in 1 Thess. 1.5-10.

5. *They sought to bring them forth.* It was at Jason's home that Paul and Silas lived.

6. *Have turned the world upside down.* Margin, *the inhabited earth.* The exaggeration is the language of passionate excitement, but it bears testimony, nevertheless, to the success of Paul's missions.

7. *There is another king.* Compare the charge made against Jesus, John 19. 12. From his epistle to the Thessalonians we know that Paul spoke often about "the Kingdom of God" and of the second coming of Christ, and this may have given rise to the charge.

9. *Taken security.* Perhaps a pledge that the city would not be troubled further by Paul and Silas is meant.

11. *More noble than those in Thessalonica.* Literally, of more noble birth.— *These things.* Paul's statements.

13. *They came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes.* Recall the acts of the Jews of Antioch and Iconium, Acts 14.19.

15. *That they should come to him.* See 1 Thess. 3.1, 2, where it appears that Timothy came but was sent back at once to Thessalonica to reassure the disciples there.

SUGGESTIVE WORDS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

6. *The rulers of the city.* The chief magistrates were called Politarchs, *i. e.* City-rulers (πολιτάρχαι). This title has not been found in classical literature, and so it was once quoted as a proof of Luke's inaccuracy, not to say powers of invention. The scholars who made that criticism were unaware that, at the very time they were writing, there was standing at Saloniki (the modern Thessalonica) a Roman triumphal arch, erected probably in the first century after Christ, on which the word Politarchs was engraved in large letters. Unfortunately the arch was destroyed in 1876, but the block containing the word was rescued and is now to be seen in the British Museum. Since then it has been found in inscriptions elsewhere in Macedonia: so it would appear to be a word of especial Macedonian use. *R. B. Rackham, The Acts.*

7, 10. *These all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar. And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night.* In 1635 Roger Williams was summoned to appear before the general court at Salem to answer the charge of maintaining dangerous opinions. After what can hardly be termed a trial, he was adjudged guilty of having "broached and divulged divers new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates" and sentence of banishment was passed against him. He was granted leave to remain in Salem till spring, provided he would not "go about to draw others to his opinions," but as many resorted to his house to hear him it was held that he had violated the condition and he was ordered to go to Boston. As he declined to do so, Captain John Underhill was despatched with a sloop to Salem to arrest him, and to put him on ship for deportation to England. Receiving friendly warning, Williams left Salem in the night with two companions and fled through the wilderness. He passed the rest of the winter on the banks of the Seekonk River, and in the spring with five companions he founded a new settlement which he named Providence "in grateful remembrance to God's merciful providence to me in my distress," as he said. At once an order was made that no one should be molested for his conscience, and in this humble way was founded the first commonwealth based on the great principle of perfect religious liberty. *Amasa M. Eaton,* in *Brown Alumni Monthly.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Paul reasoned with them from the scriptures.* In the synagogues of the East teaching was the method of instruction, and the Christian evangelists accordingly taught and preached the word. But in the more critical atmosphere of the West dogmatic assertion was not sufficient, and Paul had to adopt the method of reasoning, in which he was an adept. The reasoning, of course, was

Jewish; it was based on the scriptures. But until they recognized the Christ in them, the scriptures were a sealed book to the Jews. *R. B. Rackham.*

5. *They sought to bring them forth to the people.* Thessalonica had been made a free city by Augustus, and was entirely independent. *The people,* as in all ancient Greek cities, were the supreme authority. Hence the apostles were to be dragged before the popular assembly. *J. M. Lindsay.*

12. *Greek women of honorable estate.* In Macedonia, as in Asia Minor, women occupied a much freer and more influential position than in Athens. Men of all classes were impressed by the teaching of Paul, but only women of the leading families; and the difference is obviously due to the fact that the poorer women were most likely to be under the sway of superstition. *W. M. Ramsay.*

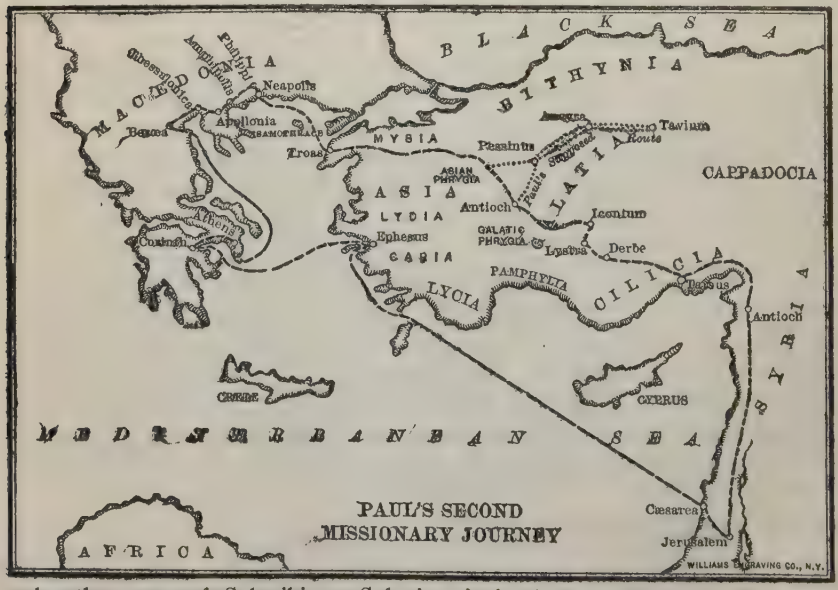
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak with you the gospel of God, wrote Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians. From the prison in Philippi, after a visit to the brethren at Lydia's house, Paul and Silas went on to Thessalonica. Several months must have been spent at Thessalonica, for while there the Philippians sent contributions twice to Paul (Phil. 4.16), and his letters to the Thessalonians show that his stay must have been prolonged. Probably the three weeks mentioned in verse three covered the time of preaching in the Jewish synagogue, and after that Paul turned to the Gentiles.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The route taken from Philippi to Thessalonica lay through Amphipolis and Apollonia, which divided the distance of about one hundred miles into three days' journeys of nearly equal length.

Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia, or Northern Greece. Its situation at the head of the Thermaic Gulf made it a great commercial city. To-day,



under the name of Saloniki or Salonica, it is the second city of European Turkey.

Berœa was forty miles southwest of Thessalonica. From there Paul went to the sea, and thence by boat or on foot along the shore to Athens, in the

province of Achaia, the Roman province which nearly corresponded to the modern Kingdom of Greece.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Travelers in Greece to-day speak of hearing as they walk along the streets of Salonica (Ancient Thessalonica) the creaking and straining of hand looms which are similar to the one at which Paul sat and worked. The goat's hair is spun into coarse thread by the women and children at their cottage doors, and then carried to the looms where it is woven into a thick, harsh cloth. From Philippi Paul went on to Thessalonica, and in his letter to the Thessalonians he says, "Ye remember our labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." Paul made cloth for tents, for that was his trade, so that he might earn money for his support and not be a burden to any one, and then he preached to the people the gospel of God. On three successive Sabbaths he preached in the Jewish synagogue.

For Older Pupils. In a luxurious home of Thessalonica about one hundred years before Paul came to Jason's home there, a guest sat writing letters. He was a most famous man, the author of books that are read to-day, which in classic Latin tell us how to endure calmly all the ills that may befall us, how to trust our friends, how to grow old gracefully. He was among devoted friends whose wealth was at his disposal. But some of the ills of life had come to him. His office had been taken from him, part of his wealth was gone, the people no longer flattered him, and he was banished from Rome. How did he bear these troubles, he who could so well tell others how theirs should be borne? He has been walking the floor, wringing his hands and sobbing, he writes; there is no hope left for him. "If you saw me, you would not see me," is the translation of the words his pen was tracing, "You would not see even a trace of me, not a shadow, but the image of a breathing corpse. Would that before this you had seen me dead!" Those of you who have studied Latin recognize in this weak man Marcus Tullius Cicero, one of the most celebrated orators of all the ages.

"Show me some one person formed according to the principles he professes," exclaimed Epictetus; "show me one who is sick and happy; disgraced and happy." Such an one was our hero Paul. Like Cicero he was an exile from home, self-exiled for the love of the gospel he was proclaiming; like him, too, he was poor, so poor that he gladly received contributions from his friends at Philippi; like him, too, he was a guest in a friend's home at Thessalonica, but, unlike him, he labored with his own hands for his suport; and instead of having every wish supplied, he was persecuted and driven from the city. Cicero knew how ills should be borne, but could not bear them; Paul bore them triumphantly.

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Loafers

Followers of the Rabble. The Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. What did these "certain vile followers of the rabble" know or care about the jealousy of the Jews or the work of Paul and Silas? There was to be rioting of some sort, that was enough for their pleasure, what it was all about mattered not. The Greek word ἀγοραῖοι, translated *rabble,* comes from the word ἀγορα, *market-place;* they were men of the market-place, a crowd of market loafers, idlers who had no business of their own, and were ready for any excitement or mischief that might turn up.

In one of our cities a man was arraigned in a police court on a charge of vagrancy. "What have you been doing?" the judge sternly asked the prisoner. "Oh, just circulatin' 'round some, Jedge," the prisoner answered. "Retired from circulation for thirty days!" announced the judge to the clerk of the court, who entered this verdict in his records. Every city has its loafers who

are quite certain to get retired from circulation sooner or later, for there is peril in idleness. An idle hanger-on of the streets may not intend any evil course, and may, indeed, escape from committing evil, but he is certain to deteriorate sadly. "Believe me when I tell you that thrift of time will repay you in after-life with a usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams," said Mr. Gladstone, "and that the waste of it will make you dwindle, alike in intellectual and moral stature, beyond your darkest reckoning."

American Loafers.

An idler is a watch that wants both hands,
As useless if it goes as if it stands,

is Cowper's valuation of loafers. This seems to have been the opinion of a business man of Boston who had been in Mexico for twenty years, and had just returned to that land after a visit to familiar scenes at home. The Mexican correspondent of the *Boston Herald* gives his words:

"I met some young fellows in Washington loafing about bar-rooms and in front of the hotels, talking about hard times. 'Boys,' I said, 'there is no need of loafing and grumbling. I'll tell you where you can get work; go over to Alexandria, and there Mr. So-and-So wants a man; another one there wants three men, and still another two. Wages are ten dollars a month, bread, butter and meat, and peaches and cream in the season.'

My reception by those young men was not enthusiastic. Some said that they had never worked at hard manual labor; others hated farming, it was so dull in the country. All sorts of excuses were given, but not one prompted by good sense and a willingness to do honest, hard work. Now that is a fine lot of young men for you! You call them, I suppose, the 'Hope of America,' and all that!"

II The Example of the Bereans

Ancient and Modern Bereans. When Paul reached Berœa after having been driven from Thessalonica, he found in the synagogue unprejudiced Jews who were ready to give his message a fair hearing. No wonder that Luke says, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica," for such Jews were rare in Paul's pathway. Not only were they open minded, but they searched the scriptures themselves, and finding that Paul's words and the prophecies were in agreement, they therefore believed.

In England there is an interdenominational movement to encourage the habit of committing portions of the Scriptures to memory. "The Berean Band" was founded four years ago. Each member is pledged to learn accurately at least one verse of the Bible every week.

These reasons for learning the Bible by heart were written for "The Berean Band" by the Bishop of Durham: "Why should I make it my rule and my habit, as far as I can, to 'learn by heart' verses, passages, chapters, of the Bible, getting them printed on my mind word for word? I should do so because the practice is actually suggested in the Holy Scriptures. Look at Psalm CXIX. There in verse 11 (our Golden Text), you read how the Psalmist 'hid the Word in his heart.' That is, to turn the Hebrew phrase into English meaning, he *stored* it, he *lodged* it, in his thought. Practically, this comes to what we mean by 'learning by heart,' if we take these words to imply not only *memory,* but the *use* of memory, for the soul's good.

Let me bear witness for myself to the precious benefits of learning the Bible by heart. Almost my first distinct recollection of anything is the saying Christmas texts to my mother on Christmas day—at least sixty-one years ago. Then in later life I was encouraged to learn whole chapters and whole epistles, word for word. I think I could still say the Philippians through correctly in English and Greek, and large parts of Hebrews, and I will commit fresh portions to memory, particularly the Psalms.

What is the benefit of it? First, I humbly believe the presence of all this Bible in the inner mind does tend, by Grace, to sweeten it, like lavender in a linen-chest. And then, in silent and solitary moments, walking by the way, lying awake at night, how beautiful it is to be able to listen to the very voice of God talking out of one's memory into the mind and soul! Ah, what a

power it is to warn, to guide, to cheer! Many a moment that would be invaded by sin, or just withered by thoughts of sorrow, is turned into purity and hope by the verse, the psalm, the chapter, said 'by heart,' in silence or with sound. Thy Word have I stored in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.

Learn your Bible. A 'step at a time,' a verse a day, or two verses, or ten, as your memory may serve; what a treasure you will gather up ere long! And the Lord of the Word will meet you through the Word, and make your memory his *telephone* for the very voice of Heaven."

How to examine the Scriptures. The Scriptures are being examined in these days as never before, and for the work of reverent and exact scholarship we should be deeply grateful. The work of Sunday-school teachers and pupils must be very different from that of the great scholars. To quote the words of Dr. Edwin E. Hughes in a talk at Chautauqua, "As the family that found a curious vessel with hieroglyphies written upon its sides but still filled with gold, could use the golden contents in the supply of needs, while allowing the archæologists to debate about the age and authorship of the vessel and the meaning of the hieroglyphics, so can we allow the scholars to discuss technical questions about the Bible, while we use its treasures for the enrichment of life. We are never really skilful in the use of the Bible until we let it find us in the deepest place of life. The Psalmist said, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.' The apostle said, 'All Scripture is given that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.' These passages represent the double purpose of the Bible. If we go to it with this purpose its high ethics will employ us forever and its ideals will keep calling to us from the distant and alluring heights of righteousness. Instead of giving ourselves to needless debates about the third chapter of Genesis, or the Book of Job, or the prophecy of Jonah, we shall discover that the Bible gives its word to every possible phase of our lives. Let us open the book with the religious purpose and with the prayer that we may so read that 'by patience and comfort of thy holy word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life.'"

Right and Wrong Examination of the Scriptures. Our knowledge of the Bible is necessarily progressive. It is evermore true that there is more light to spring forth from the Word of God. The Bible as a revelation of the infinite God must evermore be beyond the full comprehension of finite men. Each generation may be expected to make advances in the apprehension of the preceding generation.

Many criticize the Bible because it is not what they imagined it to be. It is not a universal encyclopædia, although it is wonderfully encyclopædic, not a universal history, although it is the oldest and noblest history. We do not admit its errancy as many have affirmed it, but neither ought we to allow ourselves to believe that if errancy, historical or scientific, can be proved, the Bible is therefore errant and unauthoritative on religious subjects. Those who say that if an error is found in the date of some ancient king or kingdom, or in the number engaged or killed in some ancient battle, therefore we must give up the inspiration of the Bible and the divinity of the Lord, are guilty of illogical reasoning and of a foolish surrender to the foes of revelation. They ought not to stake the defence of the citadel on maintaining an unimportant outpost. Inharmony in the details of testimony in our courts is not construed by our judges as necessarily a contradiction to the main fact, if on that point the witnesses harmonize. I have heard officers who were in the battle of Gettysburg contradict one another regarding some of the details of that historic conflict, but this discrepancy regarding unimportant facts would surely not justify a man in affirming that there never was a battle of Gettysburg!

The Bible is absolutely authoritative on matters of our spiritual life and faith. This is its chosen sphere, this is its divine design. Condensed from a sermon in "Divine Balustrades," by *Robert S. MacArthur.*

III Missionary Topic The Office of Christianity

An Unconscious Tribute. What a tribute it was to the work of Paul and Silas when those Jews haled them before the rulers of the city with the accusa-

tion that they had "turned the world upside down!" And what an unconscious acknowledgement it was of the power of the gospel proclaimed by these messengers!

It was not till toward the end of Paul's career that Christians were persecuted simply because they were Christians. The Roman Government cared not how many religions were held nor how many gods were worshipped, and Paul was never accused of being a Christian. He was accused of interfering with trade, with inciting men to violence, of turning the world upside down.

It *is* the office of Christianity to turn the world upside down in the sense of changing it, transforming it. As some one has well said, the effect of Christianity is "not a Matthew ceasing to be a mercenary publican, but a Matthew transformed into an inspired disciple and an efficient helper of the world's good; not a Paul no longer persecuting the church, but a Paul become a mighty and unceasing upbuilder of Christianity."

A Few Instances. Wherever the gospel is preached this is the result, old customs give place to new, the life is wholly changed. When Alexander Mackay went to Uganda he found the natives in the habit of offering human victims to propitiate the evil spirits, and when Suma their king died two thousand men were killed that he might not go into the other world unattended. When Mtesa, that king's son and successor died, not one life was sacrificed. Christianity had turned their superstitions and cruel practices upside down.

The testimony borne by Sir Bartle Frere while governor of Bombay as to the effects there of Christianity is most convincing: "I speak simply as to matter of experience and observation, just as a Roman prefect might have reported to Trajan, and I assure you that the teachings of Christianity among one hundred and sixty millions of civilized, industrious Hindus and Mohammedans in India are effecting changes moral, social and political which, for extent and rapidity of effect, are far more extraordinary than anything you or your fathers have witnessed in modern Europe."

Another Proof. In the last annual report of the Life Saving Service, an official statement gravely records the rescue from a sinking vessel off the coast of Hog Island in Virginia, "of twenty-six men and the cat."

During a heavy storm last December a tug put out from New York harbor to help off the crew of a wrecked schooner. They were all taken from the vessel and the tug had started for the shore when a dog was seen on deck. The tug returned promptly, and the dog was brought safely off "amid the cheers," we are told, "of the crowd of spectators on shore and on the vessels in the harbor, all of whom, apparently were dog lovers."

These are trifling incidents, but contrasted with the trifling incidents which follow, they have a certain significance. Smithfield Market in London occupies the ground on which during seven centuries was held the yearly Fair of St. Bartholomew, "as true an exhibit," says Morley, "of the changes in character of the English people as is the House of Commons." Among the favorite amusements of this Fair were bear-baiting, the burning of rats in cages, and the flaying of cats. Boys paid a penny for the privilege of chasing live rabbits on all fours like dogs. When they caught the rabbit with their teeth they tore it in pieces to show their strength. It is not surprising to read that within the limits of this Fair scores of victims were burned at the stake, the people calmly looking on, as they did "with shouts of laughter" when Sir William Wallace was drawn and quartered before them.

These were our ancestors.

The contrast between the petty facts of history then and now show us better than any written essay, how far mankind have travelled up into human and Christian life; just as the floating bits of spice wood on the waves tell the voyager that he is nearing the region of eternal summer. *Youth's Companion.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Christianity is radical, revolutionary, re-constructive. *Charles H. Parkhurst.*

"Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."

It is not honest inquiry that makes anarchy; but it is error, insincerity, half-belief, and untruth that make it. *Carlyle.*

It is with narrow-souled people as with narrow-necked bottles; the less they have in them, the more noise they make in pouring it out. *Pope.*

If you choose to obey your Bibles, you will never care who attacks them... it is just because you don't care to obey its whole words that you are so particular about the letters of them. *Ruskin.*

What is rarest in the world is fair-mindedness, method, the critical view, the sense of proportion, the capacity for distinguishing. *Amiel.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Again we meet the jealousy of the Jews. There is no feeling which the Jew had when he found that what had been his religion was going to become the possession of the world, Bishop Phillips Brooks reminds us, which does not repeat itself now in men's minds when they hear their gospel demanding of them to send it to the heathen.

Here is an agreement which Mr. R. A. Torrey sometimes asks his hearers to sign. Will you sign it? "I promise to examine carefully the evidence that the Bible is God's book and Jesus Christ is God's Son and man's Saviour; and if I find reason to believe that this book is true, and He is man's Saviour, I will accept and confess Him before men and undertake to follow Him."

Now is the time to receive the word with all readiness of mind and to examine the scriptures daily.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

From Philippi Paul and Silas journeyed to Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia. Here in the Jewish synagogue on three successive sabbaths Paul reasoned with the Jews, appealing to the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that the Christ must suffer and rise again from the dead (a doctrine that was to the Jews ever a "stumbling-block"), and that Jesus, whom he proclaimed to them, fulfilled the prophecies and therefore is the Christ. The result was that some Jews, a great multitude of Greeks, and many of the chief women believed. Some time passed, during which the jealous, unbelieving Jews stirred up a riot, and with a great rabble mobbed the house of Jason. Since Paul and Silas were not to be found, they seized Jason and others and charged them before the rulers of the city with sedition and treason—Jason had received those who had "turned the world upside down," who proclaimed that "there is another king, one Jesus." The rulers allowed them to go free after taking security from them to keep the peace.

To prevent trouble coming to their friends, Paul and Silas were obliged to leave the city. They went on to Berœa, where they received a fair hearing from the Jews in the synagogue. Unlike the Jews of Thessalonica, they did not pre-judge Paul's message, but listened to him with open-mindedness, and examined the scriptures themselves. Finding that the Scriptures agreed with Paul's words many of them believed, as did also many of the chief Greek women and many of the men. Then the hostile Jews from Thessalonica, who heard of Paul's success in Berœa, came thither and again stirred up trouble. Paul was sent by the brethren to the sea and accompanied to Athens. By his Berœan escort he sent back word to Silas and Timothy, who had remained behind, to join him at once. Thus ended Paul's work in Macedonia. From each city where he preached he had been driven away by persecution, but in establishing the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berœa he had in reality taken possession of the province of Macedonia.

SUBJECT FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

Modern examination of the Scriptures. See "Faith and Fear" in the *Outlook* for July 13, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. For what was Athens famous? 2. Who were some of her philosophers? 3. How did Luke characterize her citizens? (Acts 17.21.) 4. Review Paul's address at Lystra, and make an outline of it. (Lesson VII, 2d Quarter.) 5. Make an outline of Paul's address to the Athenians. 6. What resemblances and what differences between the two addresses? 7. What words of Stephen are recalled by verse 24? (Acts 7.48, 49.) 8. With verse 25 compare Psa. 50. 8-12 and Isa. 66.1, 2. 9. What words of Peter's are recalled by verse 30? (Acts 14.16.) 10. In what ways is Paul's address remarkable?

LESSON IV—JULY 25

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY—ATHENS

Read Acts 17.16-34. Commit verse 29

Golden Text

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth. John 4.24.

LESSON TEXT Acts 17.22-34

22 And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said,
Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. 23 For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, To AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you. 24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: 28 for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said,

For we are also his offspring.

29 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. 30 The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: 31 inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. 33 Thus Paul went out from among them. 34 But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

22. *The Areopagus.* See verse 19. Margin, *the hill of Mars.* It is a much disputed question whether we are to understand that Paul stood on the Hill, Areopagus, or Mars Hill, where the supreme court or council (which derived its name Areopagus from the hill) had met from ancient times, or whether he was brought before the Areopagus, the Council, which met at times in the Stoa Basilica, a large hall on the Agora or market place.—*Ye men of Athens.* As many have suggested, these are the classical words familiar through the writings of Thucidides and Demosthenes.—*Very religious.* A. V., *too superstitious.* The Greek verb means literally *more god-fearing* (δεισιδαιμονεστέρους, from δείδω and δαίμων). Paul's words could be taken either as a compliment or the reverse.

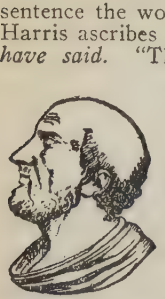
23. *To an unknown God. To unknown God* is the Greek, for there is no article. "It is more discreet to speak well of Gods, especially at Athens, where there are erected altars to unknown gods" (*Philostratus,* 244 A. D.).

24. *The God that made the world and all things therein.* See Isa. 42.5; Acts

4.24; 14.15.—*Dwelleth not in temples made with hands.* Recall Stephen's words, Acts 7.48.

25 27. *He himself giveth.* See 1 Chron. 29.14.—*Seasons.* The stages in a nations history.—*Haply,* Perhaps.

28. *In him we live and move and have our being.* Augustine joins with this sentence the words "as certain even of your own poets have said." Dr. Rendel Harris ascribes the sentence to Epimenides.—*As certain even of your own poets have said.* "The words that follow are an exact quotation from the poet Aratus. Aratus was a native of Cilicia, hence a countryman of Paul; he flourished about B. C. 270, and wrote several astronomical poems, of which two remain. A similar expression is found in the hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter, a contemporary of Aratus" (*Gloag*).



Portrait of Aratus
From Bellorius

29. *Device of man.* "Judge the Father by the child. The attack on pagan worship is as delicate as it is penetrating" (*Lindsay*).

30. *The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked.* Compare Acts 14.16.

33. *Thus Paul went out from among them.*—Having caused a division in the Areopagus and having received a polite dismissal.

34. *Dionysius the Areopagite.* A member of the court of the Areopagus, a man of distinction.

SUGGESTIVE WORDS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

22. *To the Unknown God.*

> Immortal Greece, dear land of glorious lays,
> Lo, here the Unknown God of thine unconscious praise. *Keble.*

32. *We will hear thee again of this matter.* But they never did! The Athenians left the discourse at the point of moral pressure. As long as Paul played the part of a Jewish Socrates they were willing to hear him. They said, with Athenian contemptuousness, "This seed-picker seems to have picked up some new and strange god—I wonder what it is," (verse 18). But the moment Paul flamed into moral earnestness, left the intellectual plane and came down to struggle with the heart and question it with hard interrogation, then the Athenians mocked, or with partial civility nodded to him a promise that they might come again to-morrow. We say, We will come again to-morrow. So we may, but *Paul* may not be there!

We take it for granted that our mercies, privileges and opportunities will always be available. We read in Scriptures that "the door was shut." The laggards came again and found that the door was shut. They never thought about the door being possibly closed! Some day we shall find that "the door is shut." We go back to Mars' Hill and find the teacher gone. Whilst Paul is available, make the most of him. *Joseph Parker,* in *The People's Bible.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *The objects of your worship.* Athens was the home of Greek philosophy and the centre of Greek worship. Petronius says that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens. Pausanias, that there were more images in Athens than in all the rest of Greece combined, and Xenophon that the whole city was an altar, a votive offering to the gods. It could not have been long after Paul's visit to Athens that the same council of the Areopagus erected a statue to Nero, and inscribed upon the Parthenon the legend, "The Council of the Areopagus, and the Council of the Six Hundred, and the Athenian People (to) Emperor Greatest Nero Cæsar Claudius Augustus Germanicus, Son of God." *Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life and Letters of Paul.*

23. *To an Unknown God.* Diogenes Laertius, in his "Life of Epimenides" informs us that when the Athenians at one time suffered under a pestilence, Epimenides arrested the plague in this manner: he ordered the Athenians to let go white and black sheep from the Areopagus, and on the spots where

they lay down to sacrifice them τῷ προσήκοντι θεῷ, that is, to the appropriate god, the unknown god who sent the pestilence: and Diogenes adds, Therefore there are at Athens anonymous or unnamed altars. *Paton J. Gloag.*

24. *The God that made the world.* The Epicureans denied creation, holding that matter was eternal—for "out of nothing, nothing can come"— and that our world was the result of a chance collision of atoms. *R. B. Rackham.*

25. *Neither is he served by men's hands.* The heathen regarded their sacrifices as if they were gifts to their deities—presents to propitiate their favor —as if the friendship of the gods could be purchased by gifts. They were accustomed to clothe the images of the gods with splendid garments, and to minister to them in various ways. *Paton J. Gloag.*

26. *He made of one every nation of men.* Unlike the rest of Greece, the population of Athens had been stationary from time immemorial, so the Athenians prided themselves in being "autochthonous" (indigenous), and the common people believed that their fathers had literally "sprung from the soil." The assertion that God made of one every nation was a serious blow at the Greek pride in general. Very much like the Jews in this respect, the Greeks divided the world into two kinds of men—Greeks and Barbarians—and the latter were of no account. Hence it was necessary for Paul to preach to the Greeks as well as Jews the doctrine of Catholicity, and this is marked by the characteristic recurrence of the word *all.* For this teaching, indeed, the way had been prepared by the Stoics, who had taught the brotherhood of man and that all men alike are citizens of the great city of Zeus. *R. B. Rackham.*

33. *Thus Paul went out.* "Though the immediate effect of Paul's sermon was not great, the Parthenon in time became a Christian church. The repugnance of the Greeks to images became so great as to be a principal cause of the schism between the churches of the East and West in the eighth century."

34. *And a woman named Damaris.* It is not said that she was of good birth, as was stated at Berœa and Thessalonica and Pisidian Antioch. The difference is true to life. It was impossible in Athenian society for a woman of respectable position and family to have an opportunity of hearing Paul; and the name Damaris suggests a foreign woman. *W. M. Ramsay.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Paul awaited in Athens the coming of Silas and Timothy; and he purposed going back to Thessalonica, for he was most anxious about the disciples whom he had left there (1 Thess. 2.14-18), but being hindered himself from returning, he sent back Timothy on his arrival at Athens to strengthen them (1 Thess. 3.1-5). Possibly Silas rejoined him at this time, and was sent back to Philippi, as Dr. Ramsay suggests, for both came to Corinth from Macedonia (Acts 18.5).

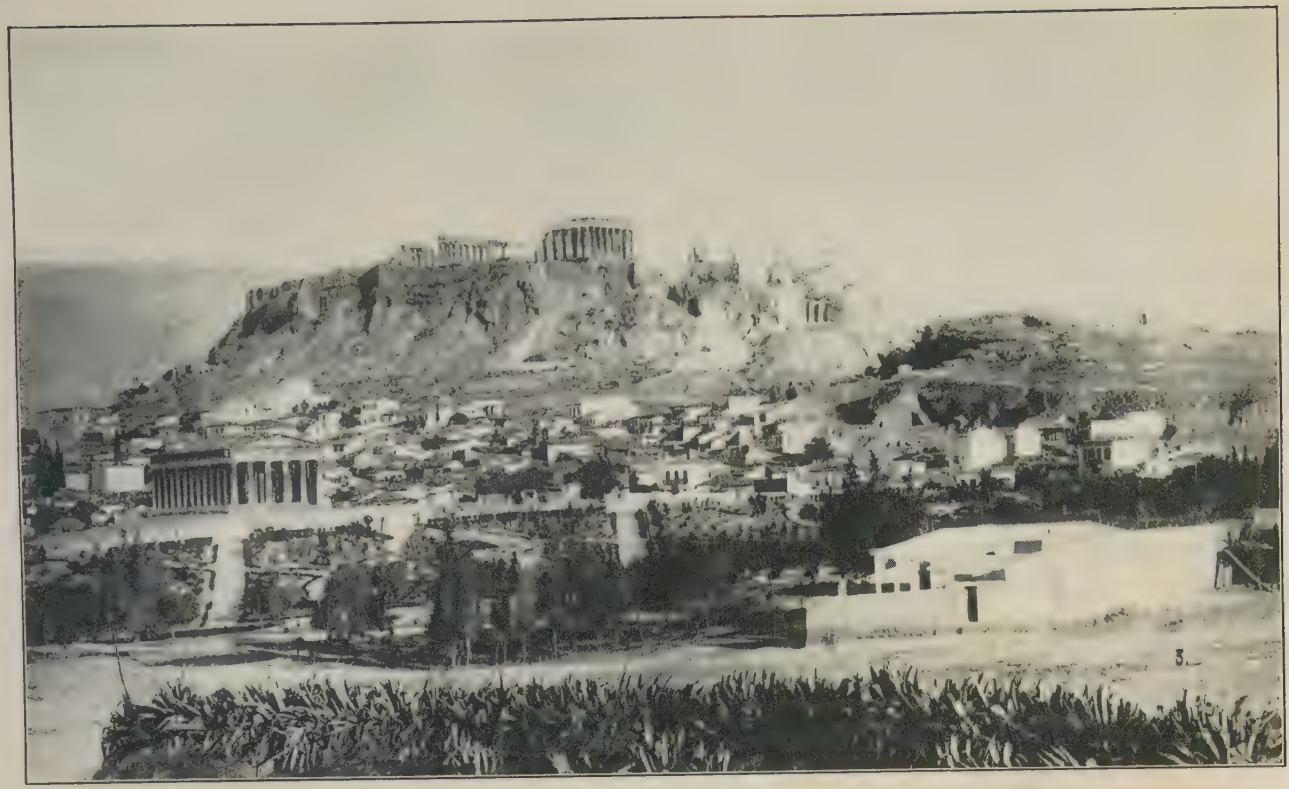
During his stay of a few weeks in Athens, Paul "preached Jesus and the resurrection" both in the synagogue and in the market place, and one day he was taken to the Areopagus and asked to explain his strange doctrine. His address is the special subject of our lesson.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

About four miles from the Saronic Gulf, on the Attic plain, which is enclosed by mountains save on the south, lies Athens, the most famous city of Greece, or of the Roman province of Achaia, as it was called in apostolic times. It was famous for its magnificent temples and statues, its philosophy and learning, its warriors, orators, philosophers, artists and poets. Near the center of the city was the Agora, an open space around which were grouped public buildings, stoas or porches, and shops. East of the Agora arose the Acropolis, a steep hill three hundred feet high, appropriated to the worship of Athena and other guardian dieties of the city. West of the Agora was the Pnyx, the hill whence the Athenian orators addressed the people. North of the Agora, between the Pnyx and the Acropolis, was the Areopagus or Mars Hill.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In very early times on a steep hill in Greece there lived a rude people. Only one narrow footpath led up to their abode, which



GENERAL VIEW OF THE ACROPOLIS AND PART OF ATHENS, WITH TEMPLE OF THESIS IN THE FOREGROUND

was always guarded at the top. They lived in the caves in the earth or among the rocks; their food was the flesh of wild animals and berries. One day while hunting in the woods they found a strange youth, handsomely clad. They brought him to their hilltop to show him to the women and children, intending to kill him later, but he taught them so many things—how to make bows and arrows, how to catch fish with hooks, how to build houses of wood, etc.—that they made him their king instead. His name was Cecrops.

By and by two strangers were seen in the streets of the town that had been built on the hilltop. How they had come there no one knew, for they had not passed the sentinel at the gate to which the narrow footpath led. The strangers were brought before King Cecrops. "I am Neptune," said the man, "and I rule the sea." "I am Athena," said the woman, "and I give wisdom to men." Then Neptune promised to make them masters of the sea and possessors of great wealth if they would accept him as their protector and give his name to their town. Athena promised to give them great wisdom if they would do this for her. Some of the people cried out, "Neptune and wealth!" and others, "Athena and wisdom!" but one old man asked for a gift from each, for they could not choose since they knew neither what wealth nor wisdom meant. Neptune gave them a horse, and Athena an olive tree. The people decided that as they had no chariots and wagons and did not care to ride faster than the wind they did not care for the horse, but would choose Athena and wisdom. King Cecrops declared the name of the city to be Athens, and on the hilltop, since called the Acropolis, they erected a temple to Athena whose ruins may still be seen.

This is the old Greek fable of the origin of Athens. It is to this city that Paul is now come on his second missionary journey, the temple to Athena stood on the Acropolis, and the city was filled with other magnificent temples and statues. As Paul wandered about the streets he grew very indignant at the great number of idols he saw everywhere.

For Older Pupils. We have seen Paul in many varied situations: preaching to the Jews at Damascus, to the Gentiles and Jews at Antioch in Syria, before the Proconsul, Sergius Paulus, at Paphos, in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia, where he was opposed and turned to the Gentiles, in a riot at Iconium, worshipped and then stoned at Lystra, before the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, talking with the women by the riverside, and then singing songs in the prison at Philippi and teaching the jailor the way to salvation, and preaching in Thessalonica and forced to escape in stealth from the city. Now we find him at Athens, addressing the philosophers of the intellectual capital of the world. Paul the Christian Jew of Tarsus is in the city of Demosthenes and Sophocles and Socrates and Plato. How will he bear himself before the great Areopagus, the Greek Sanhedrin? With the Epicureans he had no sympathy, but with the Stoics he had "the sympathy of kindred character, for in his stern Pharisaism, his eager pursuit after righteousness and a life according to law, he had been a Jewish Stoic." His speech is our lesson to-day, and the longer one studies it, the more one must marvel at its tact, confident note, and clear logic, and at its mighty themes—the unity, omnipotence, and omnipresence of God, the brotherhood of man, and the final judgment—and also at the wonderful clearness in which Luke, in so few words, gives the report, both of the scene, and the address.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Immanence of God

God is not far from Each One of Us. Jacob had thought of God as dwelling only in special places where he was to be worshipped. He had not thought of finding Him at Bethel, and in his surprise at having there a vision of God he exclaimed, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not!" The great truth had begun to dawn upon him that go where he would he was always in the presence of God. God is not far from each one of us, said Paul.

> "Speak to him thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet;
> Closer He is than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet,"

counsels Tennyson. "In Him we live and move and have our being," said Paul.

The Athenians could not grasp that overwhelming thought, nor can we understand its great mystery. The little child who seized her father's "icy hand" and questioned,

"Isn't God upon the ocean
Just the same as on the land?"

had accepted it in the only way it can be accepted, in childlike trust. Gladstone, the great statesman, accepted it in the same way, and after sixty years of public life he could say, "I hold more strongly than ever to this conviction, deepened and strengthened by long experience, of the reality, the nearness, and the personality of God."

The Practice of the Presence of God. Nicholas Herman was an awkward, uneducated lad who was born in Lorraine in the seventeenth century. He entered a monastery, but because he broke everything he touched he was put into the kitchen to wash the kettles and pots and pans. He had a calm belief in the presence of God with him everywhere and at all times, and his very countenance showed that God's presence was more real to him than aught else. Men traveled long distances to talk with him in his kitchen. "The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer," he told them, "and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the sacrament."

In one of his published letters he wrote: "Were I a preacher, I should above all other things, preach the practice of the presence of God...so necessary do I think it, and so easy, too." "The Practice of the Presence of God" is the title given to the record of his words.

"The way to realize the Divine Presence is to practice it, to believe it, and put it to the test," says *Wellspring*. "Suppose we begin to-morrow morning and try all day to live as if Christ were visible with us. It will keep us patient and sweet at breakfast time, even if the cereal has been scorched, or something has gone wrong in the kitchen. It will keep us kind and gentle when people jostle against us and do not do just as we would have them do. It will make us strong to endure temptation when we are put to the test in any way. We will do our work better, more honestly, more conscientiously, more skillfully, because the eye of the Master is on us. It should be possible to practice the presence of Christ for one little day. If we do this we can do it a second day, and then a third day. It will bring a new power into our lives, new energy, new fidelity, new joy."

II The Factor in History

God determined their Appointed Seasons. The Rt. Hon. James Bryce, in a recent article in the *Youth's Companion* on "The Personal Factor in History," refers to the two theories in regard to the cause back of the changes and developments which history records—the one being that all history is the result of general causes operating upon mankind at large, such as the geographical position of peoples, their social state, their wealth or poverty, their beliefs and ideas, and the other being that history is the result of the action of a succession of striking and powerful individual men.

When Bismark was complimented on his wonderful foresight in planning the unification of Germany, he replied that he had only done what seemed wise each day, and events had done the rest. Events are controlled by God, not man, and man is but a tool working out the divine purposes. God determines the appointed seasons of all peoples and nations, and determines the bounds of habitation, as Paul told the Athenians.

Mr. Bryce traces the personal factor in the events which led to the independence of our country: "When the American Colonies declared themselves independent of Great Britain in 1776, their enterprise seemed to European observers almost hopeless. Ships, money, men, military experience, were all on the side of King George III, and a considerable party in the colonies still adhered to him. Many were the causes which gave victory to the colonial arms; and three of them were purely personal causes, due to the individual qualities of the men concerned. George III was an obstinate man with no large grasp of mind and little diplomatic skill. If Great Britain had a great commander at that

time among her sons, she did not find him. Suppose George Washington had died on July 5, 1776. Was there another leader then living in the revolted colonies who could have planned and conducted successive campaigns as Washington did? Was there any one else who could have inspired the confidence which enabled him to sustain the hopes and spirits of his comrades and his countrymen through months and years of depression? Had George III and his ministers possessed political wisdom, they might have retained the colonies in spite of the badness of their generals. Had Washington lacked such wisdom, the party of the Revolution might have broken up through despondency or jealousies, and the resistence to the British forces might have collapsed."

"One might follow out a similar line of argument as regards the part played by Abraham Lincoln in the war of secession," continues Mr. Bryce. Very interesting and true are Mr. Bryce's deductions. Abraham Lincoln traced the course of history to its ultimate cause. In a letter to Mr. Duryea he wrote: "If it were not for my firm belief in an overruling Providence, it would be difficult for me, in the midst of such complications of affairs, to keep my reason in its seat. But I am confident that the Almighty has His plans and will work them out, and, whether we see it or not, they will be the wisest and the best for us."

You have seen a small lad happy in the belief that he is driving a horse; the reins are in his little hands, but over his hands is the strong grasp of the lad's father, and the father's hands are the guiding and controlling power. So God deals with the great men who seemingly control history; the real Guide is their heavenly Father.

God is the Controller of History. Before Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Russia he told the Russian ambassador that he would destroy that empire. The ambassador's reply was, "Man proposes, but God disposes." "Tell your master," thundered the arrogant and self-confident Corsican, "that I am he that proposes and I am he that disposes." It was a challenge to the living God to show who is the ruler of this world; and God accepted the challenge. He moved not from His august throne. But He sent one of His most humble messengers, the crystal snow-flake from heaven, to punish the audacious boaster! Napoleon flung his forces into Moscow, but in his retreat, he left on the frozen plains the bulk of his vast army; and the official returns of the Russian authorities reported 23,516 French corpses buried, and 95,816 dead horses. When in 1815, Napoleon, escaping from Elba, again threatened to dispose events in European history at his will, the Sovereign of the world, whose hand is on the helm of history, ordained that Blucher should join the Iron Duke at the turning point of the conflict of Waterloo, and that the decisive battle should turn the fate of Europe. That was the crowning victory that ushered in thirty years of peace. Napoleon found, at St. Helena, that God does dispose. *Arthur T. Pierson,* in *Modern Mission Century.*

III Missionary Topic The Unknown God

Paul and the Athenians.

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened,—
Listen!

are the words of Longfellow in his introduction to *Hiawatha.* Surely our poet as he wrote must have had in mind the address of Paul to the people of Athens. From a line of a Greek poet, and from the inscription on one of their altars, to an Unknown God, whom they were ignorantly worshipping, Paul sought to lead them on to a true worship of the Known God. He recognized

that every human heart is human; their strivings for the god they comprehended not and their groping in the darkness he would turn into right seeking and finding of God their Father who was not far from each one of them.

The Unknown God in India. In the sixteenth century there came to the North of India a great teacher of the Râma doctrine, named Tulasî Dasa. His followers at the present day number nearly a hundred millions of human beings. He contented himself with teaching what was to him the great truths of man's relationship to God. Râmaism, as explained by him, is the great religion of Northern India now. He left untouched the whole body of Hindu superstition, with its gods, angels, and devils, except so far as it conflicted with his own great doctrines. Whether a man worshipped this or that particular godling was to him a matter of indifference, as long as he also believed that there was one God and Father of all who became incarnate in this sinful world as "Râma, the Redeemer of the World," The sinner must confess his sin, and, in all faith, must throw himself before Rama, and Râma will stretch out his hand and save him. Râma is the loving father of every human being, and we, his children, are therefore brothers, and must love each other as brothers, just as we love him as father. Faith, devotion, directed to Râma, is all that is necessary for salvation, and salvation is a life of pure bliss with him after death. "Faith in his name is a little boat. The Master himself is the steersman. Stretching out his arms he crieth, 'Come, I will ferry thee across.'"

Now all this, if we substituted the name of our God for that of Râma, is the teaching of Christianity and has been borrowed from it. It had been learned by Râmanuja and his followers from the Christians of the South. Ignorance of the name and person of our Lord was no fault of Tulasî Dâsa's, but was the fault of us Christians, who let fifteen centuries slip by without carrying the good tidings to the East. It is in spite of the remissness of our forefathers that we can say that through all this time God has not left Himself without a witness in India. When we seek to convert the one hundred millions of people who confess the faith of Tulasî Dâsa it is not for us to condemn all that they believe as utterly pagan, utterly to be destroyed. Let us hold fast that which is good, and lead them on to higher things. Condensed from an article by *G. A. Grierson* in *The Bible in the World.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

History is the revelation of Providence. *Louis Kossuth.*

God is greater than the world; He is transcendent as well as immanent. *George S. Rollins.*

The longer I live, the more clearly I see there is a God who governs in the affairs of nations as well as individuals. *Benjamin Franklin.*

Our country hath a gospel of her own
To preach and practice before all the world,—
The freedom and divinity of man,
The glorious claims of human brotherhood
And the soul's fealty to none but God. *J. R. Lowell.*

Every man's life is a fairy tale written by God's finger. *Anderson.*

Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Center and soul of every sphere
Yet to each loving heart how near. *O. W. Holmes.*

Remember that, whatever charge of folly may justly attach to the saying, "There is no God," the folly is prouder, deeper, and less pardonable, in saying "There is no God but for me." *Ruskin.*

He increaseth the nations, and he destroyeth them:
He enlargeth the nations, and he leadeth them captive. Job. 12.23.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

God is not served by men's hands as though He needed anything. Some there are who look upon their Church attendance, their prayer and their praise, as a service done to God. He needs them not, but they need them. From Him they receive everything; through their worship they lift up their souls to Him.

The objects of all God's guiding is to lead men to seek after Him and find Him. For this He sent His Son, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Light. Do you know Him and love Him?

There are multitudes now who are groping blindly to find God, but to them He is still an Unknown God. Are we helping to make Him known to these our brothers?

It is an inspiring doctrine, this truth that God is everywhere, that He is not far from each one of us. Do we realize His presence? Does our faith make Him real, an ever present Guide in our daily lives?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

While walking about the streets of Athens, Paul's spirit was aroused by the sight of so many idols, and in the synagogue, in the market place, whenever men would listen to him, he "preached Jesus and the resurrection." The Epicurean and the Stoic philosophers heard him, and some of them mocked, while others said that he proclaimed strange gods. The Athenians were wont to spend their time in telling or hearing about some new thing, Luke tells us in an aside, and so one day they laid their hands on Paul and brought him to the place where the Areopagus, or council, was meeting and bade him explain his new teaching. Paul stood up and answered them. Pointing to the magnificent statues near by, he told them that they were very religious. He had even seen an altar inscribed To An Unknown God; the Deity whom they knew not is the true God, the Creator of the universe, he affirmed; unlike their idols, He is not limited to one place, nor is He served by men's hands, He who is the Creator and Preserver of all life. All mankind are of one race, all sons of one Father even as their own poets had said, and He controlled their duration and limited their territory. His purpose through it all had been to make Himself known to them and to induce them to know Him. Though He is near, —for in Him we live and move and have our being—yet He must be sought after and found. Since they were the offspring of God, they ought not to think their Father could be like a graven image; such ignorant worship on their part God had overlooked in the past, but now the time had come when there must be a change, there must be a repentance. Up to this point his audience had listened willingly enough, but when Paul began to tell them his special message, the call to repentance, the future judgment by the Judge whose resurrection from the dead was His divine credentials, they would listen no longer. Some openly mocked, others politely said that they would hear him again, and thus Paul was dismissed. His earnest address convinced a few men, among them Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, and also a woman named Damaris, of its truth, but the Athenians as a whole rejected his message and he passed on to Corinth.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The address of Paul at Athens a lesson for missionaries and for those who speak and write about the faiths of non-Christian peoples.
2. The essential unity of the human race. See "Christ and the Human Race," in the Wm. B. Noble Lectures, by Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What does Paul say about his working for a living in Acts 20.34; 1 Thess. 2.9; 2 Thess. 3.8? 2. Is work desirable for everyone? 3. What can you learn about Aquila and Priscilla from Acts 18.2, 26; 1 Cor. 16.19; Rom. 16. 3-5; 2 Tim. 4.19? 4. Does discouragement come to great and successful men? 5. Where had Paul left Silas and Timothy? (Acts 17.14.) 6. What message had Paul sent back to them? (Acts 17.15.) 7. Where was Timothy afterwards sent? (1 Thess. 3.1, 2.) 8. What news did Timothy bring Paul at Corinth? (1 Thess. 3.6.) 9. What former symbolical act of Paul's is recalled by his shaking his raiment, verse 6? (Acts 13.51.) 10. What symbol did Pilate use to declare freedom from responsibility in Christ's death? (Matt. 27.24, 25.)

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LESSON V—AUGUST 1

CLOSE OF PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Read Acts 18.1-22. Commit verses 9, 10.

Golden Text

In the world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16.33.

LESSON TEXT Acts 18.1-11

1 After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; 3 and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tent-makers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 9 And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: 10 for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he dwelt *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *After these things.* After the events at Athens.

2. *Aquila, a man of Pontus by race.* He is mentioned again in 1 Cor. 16.19; Rom. 16.3, and 2 Tim. 4.19.—*Claudius.* Claudius succeeded Caligula as Emperor of Rome in A. D. 41.

3, 4. *Tentmakers.* Perhaps they wove the cloth as well as made it into tents. —*Persuaded Jews and Greeks.* R. V. M., Greek, *sought to persuade.*

5. *But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia.* See Acts 17. 14-16; 1 Thess. 3.1, 2. —*Paul was constrained by the word.* "He surrendered himself to the constraint of the word, *i. e.* the necessity to preach the gospel. The King James' Version gives (though probably not the right reading) the right sense—he was *pressed in spirit*" (*Rackham*).

6. *Blasphemed.* R. V. M., *railed.*—*He shook out his raiment.* "He shook out his lap, as if he were shaking out their lot from the kingdom of God. Compare Neh. 5.13. What that meant his words show. They were rejecting Christ like the Jews who crucified Him at Jerusalem, and their blood—their consequent expulsion from the eternal life (13.46)—was upon their heads. Compare Matt. 27.24, 25.—*From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles, i. e.* here in Corinth. Compare Acts 13.46, when the "turning to the Gentiles" was in Antioch.

7. *He departed thence.* From the synagogue, v. 4.—*One that worshipped God.* He was a Gentile proselyte.

8. *Crispus believed in the Lord.* He was baptized by Paul, 1 Cor. 1.14.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

2. *With his wife Priscilla.* It is notable that the apostle in mentioning these two to the church in Rome as sharing his labors in the gospel, mentions the wife first, although that was even more contrary to the usages of those times than of ours. It is not unfair to suppose that she was the abler and more eminent person of the two, that she took the lead in gathering that church in their house, and that Apollos was her convert for Christ.

Professor Harnack, of Berlin, gives her a credit even beyond this. He regards her as the author of the great Epistle to the Hebrews, in which our Lord's priestly work is set forth so beautifully. It is now the general opinion that Paul did not write that epistle. Luther suggested Apollos as the author, and others have claimed it for Luke, for Timothy, for Silvanus, and for others yet. Professor Harnack gives reasons for rejecting all of these, one being that if any of them had written it, he would have been given credit for it in the superscription. He believes it was ascribed to Paul because it was destitute of any other name in its title, and that the right name had been dropped off by some copyist, who was shocked by the appearance of a woman as a theological writer. *Robert Ellis Thompson,* in *Forward.*

2. *Because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.* Ever since Pompey had brought a contingent of Jewish prisoners to Rome in B. C. 61, the Jewish settlement, which had rapidly grown in numbers and importance, had proved a turbulent element in the city, very distasteful to the authorities. Tiberius had deported four thousand Roman Jews to Sardinia in the hope that the malaria might destroy them. And now, about A. D. 49, Claudius had issued an edict banishing the Jews from the city altogether. *R. B. Rackham.*

It was mainly by the help of Herod Agrippa that Claudius had been raised to the imperial throne. The emperor retained a grateful recognition of the service the Jewish prince had rendered him. In proof of his gratitude, Claudius confirmed Agrippa in his authority as ruler of Galilee, and added to his domain the provinces of Samaria and Judea. He also, for Agrippa's sake, shewed great favor to the Jews, who crowded to Rome and rose to no small influence in the State.

For thirteen years his favor knew no change. Then, however, two causes conspired to alienate him from the Hebrew people. First, the Jews of Judea broke out into revolt against the Roman yoke. Fierce and bloody conflicts occurred between the Jewish zealots and the Roman legions. It was not deemed safe to permit many thousands of a disaffected and hostile race to remain in the imperial city. Another reason for this edict comes from a very unexpected source. Suetonius, the Latin historian, wrote the life of the Emperor Claudius, and in that life there occurs this remarkable phrase: "The Jews, who, instigated by Chrestus, were in constant commotion, he (Claudius) banished from Rome."

It is *not* remarkable that a heathen historian should call the Lord Jesus *Chrestus,* instead of *Christus,* for *Chrestus,* or "Good," was a common name with the Romans, while *Christus,* or "Anointed," was wholly unknown to them; and Suetonius might well make a mistake in a single letter. Suetonius no doubt means that the dissensions between Jews and Christians had already risen to such a height as to attract public attention, and appear to threaten the public peace. Yet when the Jews were expelled from Rome scarcely twenty years had elapsed since the death of Christ. St. Paul did not arrive in Rome till ten years after this date. No other apostle had been here. The good seed had sprung up of itself. The great Roman Church was founded we know not how. But for the casual phrase of a heathen historian we should not have known that it was a strong zealous church in the days of the Emperor Claudius. *Samuel Cox,* in *An Expositor's Note Book.*

Like some other edicts it does not seem to have been strictly or permanently enforced. *J. V. Bartlet.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *By their trade they were tent-makers.* The rabbinical law required every Jewish father, however rich he might be, to teach his son some manual trade.

"He that teaches not his son a trade, does the same as if he taught him to be a thief," said Rabbi Judah. Rabbi Hillel was a woodcutter by trade; Rabbi Shammai a carpenter. Paul was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and he learned the local industry, the weaving into cloth of goat's hair (called *cilicium* after Cilicia) and the making of the cloth into tents. Paul supported himself by his trade at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2.9; 2 Thess. 3.8) and Ephesus (Acts 20.34) as well as at Corinth.

"Tent making is an important occupation in Western Asia at the present time," says Van Lennep. "In all the large cities, and especially in Constantinople, there is a portion of the bazar, or business part of the town, entirely devoted to this branch of industry. Here men may be seen engaged in cutting and sewing canvas, in constructing or finishing off tents of various forms and sizes, in mending and repairing those long used, or packing them up for their customers."

6. *He shook out his raiment.* Compare Acts 13.51 and Neh. 5.13. This was a gesture of contempt, and indicated that he would have nothing more to do with them.

6. *Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean.* Compare Matt. 27.24, 25. This was a solemn assertion of innocence.

8. *The ruler of the synagogue.* In the temple synagogue the ruler was the third officer in rank; the first officer being the high priest, and the second the chief of the priests. In provincial synagogues the ruler was supreme. No one was eligible to this office until he had a certificate from the Great Sanhedrin that he possessed the requisite qualifications. His election was by the members of the synagogue. It was his duty to supervise all matters connected with worship. *Freeman.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Luke does not tell us why Paul left Athens and went on to Corinth, and the account which he gives of Paul's work in Corinth, where he spent eighteen months, a longer time than in any other city save Ephesus, comprises only eighteen verses of Acts. During that time he wrote his letters to the Thessalonians. From his letters written the year following to the Church which he founded at this time in Corinth, we gain a better insight into the daily life of an apostolic church than from any other of Paul's letters.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The distance between Athens and Corinth is about fifty miles. Corinth is situated on the isthmus which unites the Peloponnesus with the mainland. The canal was not cut across this isthmus at this time, and boats were dragged overland between the port of Lechæum on the Corinthian Sea (Gulf of Lepanto) and the port of Cenchreæ, on the Saronic Gulf (Gulf of Ægina) in order to avoid the stormy passage around the peninsula. Because of its location, Corinth was the chief commercial city of Greece, and was therefore noted for its luxury.

Coin of Corinth. Obv. Head of ANTONINUS PIUS: Rev. Port of Cenchreæ with statue of Neptune in center, a temple at each end, and ships below

Pontus, where Aquila's family had lived, was a Roman province of Asia Minor bordering on the Black sea.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils.

If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work,

Shakespeare tells us. Do you believe this? Do you enjoy the long summer "playing holiday" as much toward the end as you do at the beginning? Work is so necessary for every one's happiness that those who have none make hard work of their play.

A young man came to visit the monk Macarius and found him weaving a

mat. "What," exclaimed the youth, "do you work for food that perishes?" The monk did not answer him, but handed him a book and bade him sit down and read. Noon came, and instead of being invited as a guest to eat he was told that in the cloister the apostolic rule held good—If any will not work, neither let him eat. This was the rule of the apostle Paul; written by him from Corinth to the Church at Thessalonica. What work was Paul himself doing at this time at Corinth?

For Older Pupils. In his Epistle to the Romans (16.3, 4) Paul sends greetings to two "fellow-workers in Christ Jesus," Prisca and Aquila, and adds that for his life they "laid down their own necks," and unto them not only he gave thanks "but also all the churches of the Gentiles." In what city these fellow-workers risked their lives for Paul, we do not know. We first hear of them at Corinth. From what city had they come? Why had they left Rome? When Paul left Corinth they went with him to Ephesus. Writing to the Corinthians from Ephesus Paul says that "Aquilla and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with their church that is in their house." It was at Ephesus that they took Apollos to their home, and taught him how to preach accurately the gospel as Paul had taught them. Later we find them at Rome, and again at Ephesus. What first brought them to the acquaintance and friendship of Paul?

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Dignity of Work.

Study to work with Your Hands. The negroes of East Africa are wont to say that "The white man works, the black man does not; the white man is a common man, the black man is a gentleman." The ancient Greeks and Romans had slaves to do their work, and deemed manual labor beneath the dignity of a free born citizen. "Manual labor is dishonorable," Cicero declared. Wholly different was the belief and practice of the Jews and early Christians. Jesus Christ Himself sanctified toil. His early years were spent in a carpenter's home, and no doubt He Himself labored at this trade, and during all His public ministry He identified Himself with those who toiled. Beautifully has Dr. Henry Van Dyke expressed this:

They who tread the path of labor, follow where Christ's feet have trod,
They who work without complaining, do the holy will of God.
Where the weary toil together, there am I among my own,
Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I with him alone.
This is the Gospel of Labor—sing it, ye bells of the Kirk,
The Lord of Love came down from above to live with the men who work.

"Many of His most beautiful parables grew out of His familiarity with the tasks of the shepherd and husbandman," notes Dr. Abbott; "Many of the deepest truths He gave to His disciples were made real and comprehensible by the imagry of the working life in the fields and at home; and when He said, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' He not only gave a divine sanction to work, but He made it a part of the divine life."

The apostle Paul was one of the world's greatest workers—whether at work with his hands, laboring at his trade of a tentmaker, or at the work of ministry, preaching or writing letters to his churches, he was never idle. "Study to work with your hands, even as we charged you," and "If any will not work, neither let him eat," is his advice in his letters to the Thessalonians.

All Honest Work is Honorable. Said the President of Dartmouth College: "In my own College there is an old rule, dating back to the very beginning of its life, that any student who 'speaks diminutively of work' shall do the work of which he speaks. I wish that it were possible to enforce this rule as applied to brains as well as to hands. For until we can insure in our colleges and universities a profound respect for work, we cannot be sure that the man whom we send out among the toiling masses will take his place honestly among them, or even that he will play the gentleman."

A fireman on the New York Central was advanced to the position of engineer. He ran his engine during the day, and studied at night till he fitted himself for college. He entered Union College and attended what lectures and

recitations he could, while all the time running an engine several hours daily. He kept up with the work of his class, and on the day of graduation, he left his engine after his usual run, washed up, put on cap and gown and delivered his thesis, and then after leaving at home his diploma and cap and gown, and putting on his working shirt, he mounted his engine and made another run. That man is Professor Morris, who is now at the head of the mechanical department of Cornell University.

Like Your Work. In Kate Douglas Wiggin's story of "Polly Oliver's Problem," the heroine is a little girl who has bravely helped her widowed mother for several years in her work of keeping boarders. She heartily dislikes the work, but she does it well, never shirking. Then there comes an opportunity to engage in work that is congenial. The new work will be hard work, a friend tells her. "I know it will be hard work" is Polly's reply, "but who cares if work is hard, if he likes it?" She has the true philosophy. Work done with interest, no matter what it is nor how hard it is, is altogether different from that done only through necessity or a sense of duty.

The vast majority of workers are workers merely from necessity.

"For men must work and women must weep,
And there's little to earn and many to keep."

It is not, however, only the men who dig the ditches and the women who wash the dishes, but often the men who keep the books and the women who teach, who work merely from necessity, without any love of the work or interest in it. And there is another great army of workers, who do not need to work in order to support themselves and others, but who work from a sense of duty, for "no amount of wealth sets one free from the obligation to work in a world the God of which is ever working," as George Macdonald says. "He who works not has not yet discovered what God made him for, and is a false note in the orchestra of the universe." All the world should belong to one of these two classes, for work is a blessing to any one and there should be no idlers, but what a difference it would make if all these workers would also take an interest in what they are doing, if they only liked it! All the effective work, all the great work of this world is done only by those whose heart is in their work. It matters not how hard the work may be if the workers only like it, and there is no work that must be done in which the worker may not find some interest. "The crowning fortune of a man is to be born to some pursuit which finds him employment and happiness, whether it be to make baskets, or broad swords, or canals, or statues, or songs," is Emerson's true edict.

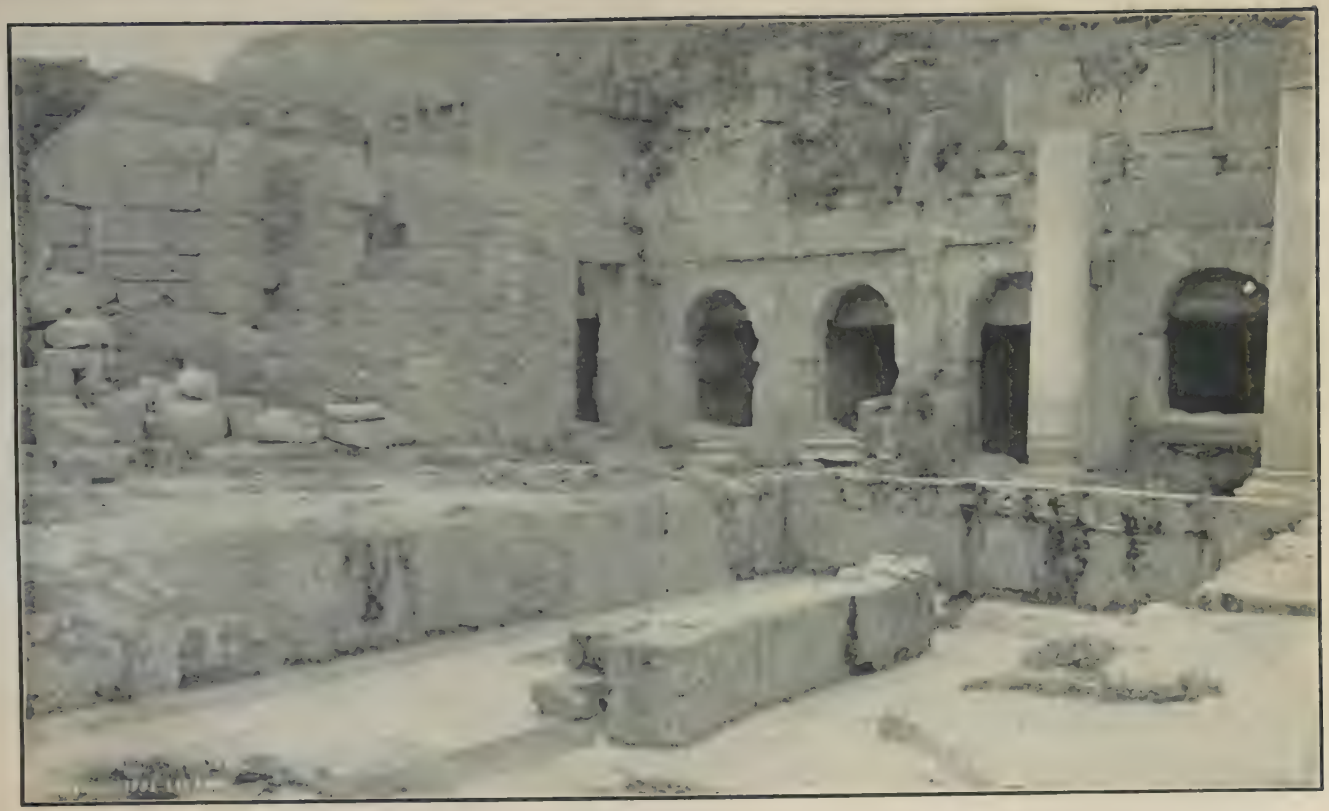
After a life filled with remarkable achievements, President Harper of Chicago University, twelve days before his death, prayed with his friends who were around his bedside, and in his prayer he said, "May there be for me a life beyond this life, and in that life may there be work to do, tasks to accomplish."

II Religious Moods.

Paul's Mood. In "Pauline and Other Studies" Professor Ramsay says of our hero: "He is the typical, the representative man, who attains in moments of higher vision and inspiration to behold the truth, to commune with the divine nature. He has, too, far more of such visions than other men. They are the greatest glory of his life, in which he might reasonably take pride. But one feels that with Paul the vision lasted no long time. It was present with him only for a moment, and then he was once more on the level of humanity. Yet that, after all, is why Paul is so close to us."

A careful reading of our lesson text for to-day discloses a discouraged note. When he first came to Corinth he reasoned in the synagogue only on the Sabbath, and it was not till Silas and Timothy joined him that he was "constrained by the word." In 2 Thess. 3.1, 2, written from Corinth, Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for him, that he might be "delivered from unreasonable and evil men." The language used in the vision that came to him implies that Paul was disheartened, tempted to keep silence, and in need of special divine encouragement. "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee."

The reasons for Paul's depression are not far to seek. He had had only



FOUNTAIN OF PERINI, CORINTH

This fountain, one of the most noted in the ancient world, was excavated in 1899 by the American School at Athens. To this fountain Paul must have often come. At this place of public concourse he may first have fallen in with Aquila and Priscilla.

trouble and danger since, in obedience to his last vision at Troas, he had crossed over into Europe. He was weighed down with anxiety in regard to the steadfastness of the converts in Macedonia, as his letter to the Thessalonians shows, he missed the sympathy and assistance of Silas and Timothy, his work at Athens had been productive of little result, the city of Corinth was renowned for its wickedness, and his bodily strength was depleted. "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," are his own words in 1 Cor. 2.3. Many have seen in his words of 1 Cor. 2.1-2 a recoil from his philosophic address at Athens. Professor Ramsay puts it thus: "And I, brethren, when I came among you, came not announcing in superior language (as a rhetorican) or in superior wisdom (as a philosopher) the mysterious nature of God (as a King reserved for the initiated few); for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

"I should think you would have been utterly discouraged," remarked a friend who had been listening to a missionary's account of her first days in the foreign village where she had gone to labor. "Oh, but you know I was not there to be discouraged," was her wise answer. Paul had not gone on his missionary tour to be discouraged, and when Silas and Timothy came he was again "constrained," wholly possessed by and engrossed in his work.

The Lesson of Paul's Mood. We have in this great champion of the faith, in this strong runner of the Christian race, in this chief of men, an example of the fluctuation of mood, the variation in the way in which we look at our duties and our obligations, and our difficulties, the slackening of the impulse which dominates our lives, that is too familiar to us all. It brings Paul nearer to feel that he, too, knew these ups and downs. The force that drove this meteor through the darkness varied, as the force that impels us varies to our consciousness. It is the prerogative of God to be immutable, men have their moods and their fluctuations. Kindled lights flicker, the sun burns steadily. An Elijah to-day beards Ahab and Jezebel and all their priests, and to-morrow hides his head and says, "Take me away, I am not better than my fathers." There will be ups and downs in the Christian vigor of our lives, as well as in all other religions, as long as men dwell in this material body and are surrounded by their present circumstances. . . .

No human hand has ever drawn an absolutely straight line. That is the ideal of the mathematician, but all ours are crooked. But we may indefinitely diminish the magnitude of the curves. No two atoms are so close together as that there is no film between them. No human life has ever been an absolutely continuous, unbroken series of equally holy and devoted thoughts and acts, but we may diminish the intervals between kindred states, and may make our lives so far uniform as that to a bystander they shall look like the bright circle which a brand whirled round in the air makes the impression of on the eye that beholds. We shall have times of brightness and of less brilliancy of vigor and of consequent reaction and exhaustion. But Christianity has for one of its objects to help us to master our moods, and to bring us nearer and nearer, by continual growth, to the steadfast, unmovable attitude of those whose faith is ever the same. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *The Victor's Crowns.*

III Missionary Topic I am Clean

Responsibility can not be Evaded. Wherever Paul went he first preached the gospel to the Jews and only when they rejected it did he turn to the Gentiles. "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites....my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved," are his earnest words in Romans. His personal interest and his conscience bade him offer his message first to them. But when, as at Antioch in Pisidia and here at Corinth, they thrust it from them he then turned with a clear conscience to the Gentiles. "I am clean," he could say, I am free from responsibility in this matter, you yourselves have judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, and I can not help it.

Our inability to say the same of our own responsibility for those who have not heard the message of Christ is shown in these words of Dr. Maltbie D.

Babcock: "If Jesus Christ is every thing to me, I know He can be every thing to any man; and because I know it then woe is me if I do not do all that is in my power to let every man who does not know Jesus Christ share Him with me. There is no escape from this logic. If I love Jesus Christ— which means if I am loyal to Him—I am in touch with every body to the ends of the earth who needs Him, and I can not wash my hands and say that He must excuse me from this matter."

Our Duty to Our Neighbors. Suppose, to use Mr. H. C. Mabie's illustration, a poor widow and six children were living in poverty and disease and ignorance. Suppose that you alone knew of an abundance of gold, left in a vault unknown to the family, sufficient for the supply of their needs, the education of the children, etc., and suppose you knew that the widow has the key by which she can unlock these hidden treasures; and that you left them, year after year, to live and die in poverty and disease and ignorance, because it was not convenient for you to go and tell them the good news: What would mankind think of you? Surely the unevangelized peoples of the earth are living in poverty and disease and ignorance and sin. Surely the Christians of the world can reach them, if it is really important that we do so. If Christ had died for them, and if they are possible heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, they have potential riches for time and eternity of infinite worth. Moreover, we can tell these suffering nations and races where to find and how to apply the key which will open to them this divine storehouse. What shall we say in the day of judgment, if like the priest and Levite, we pass by on the other side, and leave heathen humanity unhelped by the wayside? *Bishop J. W. Bashford,* in *God's Missionary Plan for the World.*

An Example of Heathen Sense of Responsibility for Others. Matayo, a native of Uganda, was a convert to Christianity, but he was unable to resist the temptation to drink. His Christian friends pleaded with him to give it up, but he told them that it was his own business and asked them to let him alone. "When you were shot on the battlefield and were dying, we helped to save you," one of them told him. "Now you have a wound that will make you sick, and perhaps kill you. We will not leave you alone."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Know what thou canst work at, and work at it like Hercules. *Carlyle.*

> Dear Work! art thou the curse of God?
> What must His blessing be? *Mrs. Browning.*

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing. *Theodore Roosevelt.*

> No man is born into the world whose work
> Is not born with him; there is always work
> And tools to work withal, for those who will;
> And blessed are the horny hands of toil! *Lowell.*

It is a contemptible thing to luxuriate in idleness; it is a most royal thing to labor. *Alexander the Great.*

Of one thing I feel sure—that something outside of myself speaks to me, and holds me to duty; warns, reproves, and approves; it is good, for it requires me to be good; it is wise, for it knows the thoughts and interests of the heart; it is to me a revelation of God. *John G. Whittier.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

All honest work is honorable. To get the best happiness out of your work you must heed George Eliot's words, who says that "You must love your work, and not be always looking over the edge of it, wanting your play to begin; and you must not be ashamed of your work, and wanting to be doing something else."

An English preacher refers to Ruskin's criticisms of Raphael's representation of Christ's Charge to Peter,—three of which are that the disciples' hair is curled and they are wearing sandals after a night in the sea mists, that they are clad in robes with trains (an appropriate fishing costume), and that instead

of surrounding Christ, they are in a line to be shown,—and then he adds that the Old Masters lifted men and women out of the ordinary experiences of human life and put them on impossible planes, for those old artists did not understand that God does not call men away from the commonplaces of busy days. There is no such fault to be found with our picture of the apostle Paul. With all his great spirituality, he does not live on an impossible plane, he is very human, and his humanness is very helpful.

Beautifully has James Martineau said: "Are you haunted by a pessimistic misgiving? Be it ours to doubt the glooms and not the glories of our souls. Are you troubled by the inconsistency of your better moods? Be comforted. He who gave the moon her phases and its summer and winter to the year, in all the provinces of our nature has appointed the like alternations. God has so arranged the chronometry of our spirits that there shall be thousands of silent moments between the striking hours." That is a word for us all; I do not forget the differences of temperament. But we must not, need not, be the slaves of temperament or of moods. If we may not live on the heights, we can work and wait in the valleys. *Thomas S. Hastings.*

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

When Paul arrived at Corinth he met Aquila and Priscilla, who had recently come there from Rome, whence they had been driven away by an edict of Claudius ordering all Jews to leave the city, and he made their home his own while he worked with them at their common trade of tent-making. On the Sabbaths only he preached to the Jews and Greeks in the Jewish synagogue. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, bringing with them news that the converts there were "standing in the Lord" (1 Thess. 3.6-9), Paul was greatly encouraged, and feeling impelled to proclaim his message he began with renewed energy to testify to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. The Jews would not believe, but railed upon him till in righteous indignation he shook out his robe as if to shake himself free from all responsibility, and said to them that they alone had brought eternal destruction upon themselves, his conscience was free from all guilt, and he should now go to the Gentiles.

Adjoining the synagogues was the house of Titus Justus, a proselyte; and thither Paul went. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and his household were among those who believed Paul's preaching and were baptized. Paul was encouraged by a vision in the night when he heard Christ's promise of His presence with him, His assurance of safety from harm, and of ultimate success.

For eighteen months Paul remained in Corinth. Opposition grew, and at length the Jews brought him before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, and accused him of proclaiming an unlawful worship. Gallio refused to consider their complaint, for he was "not minded to be a judge of those matters." When Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, was beaten, Gallio left him to the mob, being indifferent to all Jewish strife. Some time after this Paul departed for Ephesus.

SUBJECT FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul's preaching at Corinth. Read the summary of the Gospel message given in 1 Cor. 15.1-11. See Chapter VI of "The Life and Letters of St. Paul" by Dr. Lyman Abbott.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. How long did Paul labor at Thessalonica? 2. What was the cause of his leaving? 3. Where has he been since? 4. What books of the New Testament did Paul write? 5. When and from what city was his first letter to the Thessalonians written? 6. Read the entire fifth chapter of this letter. 7. What does Paul say about the conduct of the Thessalonians since his departure, in 1 Thess. 1.6-10? 8. What message did Timothy bring him about them? (3.6.) 9. What words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are recalled by verses 14 and 15? 10. Does verse 17 mean that we must do nothing in life but pray? 11. In what city had Paul's hearers followed his counsel of verse 21? (Acts 17.11.)

LESSON VI—AUGUST 8

PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE THESSALONIANS

Read 1 Thess. 5.12-24. Commit verses 16-18.

Golden Text

See that none render unto any one evil for evil, but always follow after that which is good. 1 Thess. 5.15.

LESSON TEXT 1 Thess. 5.12-24

12 But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. 15 See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all. 16 Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward. 19 Quench not the Spirit; 20 despise not prophesyings; 21 prove all things; hold fast that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil.

23 And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

12. *Know them.* "The word *know* is used in the Hebrew sense, implying regard and friendship" (*Drummond*). See 1 Tim. 5.17.—*Over you in the Lord.* See Heb. 13.17.

14. *The disorderly.* A reference here is seen to those Thessalonians who gave up their work because they thought the coming of Christ near at hand. See 1 Thess. 4.11, 12.—*Faint-hearted.* Better than the *feeble-minded,* King James' Version.—*Longsuffering.* A good definition of *patience.* —"The whole phraseology of this verse is military: the disorderly, those who are out of their ranks, those who will not do the work prescribed and who will meddle with what is not commanded; the faint-hearted, those who, on the eve of a battle, are dispirited; the weak, the companions that are likely to be most exposed; be longsuffering, let not the officers lose their temper nor courage" (*Clarke*).

16. *Rejoice always.* A companion verse to "Jesus wept." "A joyous temper is one on which Paul sets great store. It is closely connected with thankfulness which not only flows forth for every obvious blessing, but in everything finds traces of the love of God; and it is nurtured by prayer, the inward communion which consecrates every word and deed" (*Drummond*).

17. *Pray without ceasing.* "Ye are dependent on God for every good; *feel* that dependence at all times, and ye will always be in the spirit of prayer, and as frequently as possible be found in the exercise of prayer" (*Clarke*). Prayer may be uttered by the lips or expressed by the life.

18. *In everything give thanks.* For adversity as well as prosperity, for all things work together for good to them that love God.

19. *Quench not the Spirit.* The Holy Spirit which enlightens and purifies the soul, is thought of as a fire that may be quenched by deeds contrary to His will and nature.

20. *Despise not prophesyings.* Prophesyings may be here used in the sense of "preaching" rather than of "prediction," but it probably refers to the utterances made under the influence of the Holy Spirit. See the account in 1 Cor. 14.

21. *Prove all things.* Try the Spirits (1 John 4.1), the different teachers, by the word of God" (*Clarke*).

22. *Every form of evil.* This may include "all appearance of evil" (A. V.) in the sense that what appears to others to be evil is evil for you.

24. *Faithful is he that calleth you.* See 1 Cor. 1.9; 1 Thess. 2.12.

SUGGESTIVE WORDS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

13. *Esteem them exceeding highly.* We impoverish ourselves when we withhold honor from the honorable. For here is a great law of life: when we truly honor the honorable we become identified with it. When we honor genuine nobility we enlist ourselves in the same chivalrous order. No man can pay true homage to a hero without, in the very homage, acquiring something of the heroic spirit. We appropriate what we approve. *J. H. Jowett,* in *Record of Christian Work.*

14. *The Disorderly.* Walking on the street one day at nightfall, a lady saw before her two young and pretty girls. They seemed to her to be girls of good moral character, although their dress was too gay, their voices were too loud, and their walk was a bold swagger. At that moment they passed a group of young men, who, from their conversation, she inferred were medical students. The voices of the young girls as they passed this group grew louder and their glances were self-conscious. One of the young men, leaving the others, followed the young women, and spoke quietly to the louder of the two, but so that the lady could not help hearing what he said. "Look here!" he exclaimed. "You're not a bad girl, but you are acting as if you were one. If you want to be respected and to keep your own respect, you can't afford to behave as you are doing on the street. If you have a mother, go to her." The girl, frightened and almost crying, went home, and the young man went on his way. His rebuke seemed the most simple and natural of kindly acts. "He rebuked and helped me," said the elder woman, "as much as I hope he helped the foolish girl." *Youth's Companion.*

14. *Be longsuffering toward all.* Have patience; the race is not to be won all at once; it is a long, trying work. Have patience with the many obstacles; patiently get over them. Have patience with the falls you sustain; patiently gather yourselves up again. Have patience with the small progress you make, when the way is dark, and you seem far from home. Forget the things that are behind, and keep the mark for the prize before you. Have patience ever, and with that which it is hardest to have patience with—yourselves. *A. B. Davidson.*

17. *Pray without ceasing.*

> To worship rightly is to love each other,
> Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer. *Whittier.*

19. *Quench not the Spirit.* The flower can shut up its calyx, and keep out all the sunshine. The earth can drink in the rain, and then it gets a blessing, or it can fling it off, and then it inherits cursing, and is nigh to be burned. Nobody can explain what everybody knows, and, alas! is himself an example of—the possibility of the tiny, impotent human will, perking itself in the face of God, and saying, "I will not." "How often would I...but ye would not." But, if the power is strange, surely the fact that we so commonly exercise it is stranger and sadder still,—that any man should, as so many of us are doing, put away from himself the influences that are being brought to bear upon him, as truly as Christ's seeking love has brought to bear on the traitor. *Alexander Maclaren.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

19. *Quench not the Spirit.* Though Paul "spoke with tongues more than all" the Corinthians, he does not set a high value on the gift of glossolaly. Its phenomena might be counterfeited, either by evil spirits, to whose operation the early Christians ascribed the miracles of paganism; or by religious im-

postors, of which the world was then full. The Church very soon recognized the necessity of "discerning the spirits," and this applied to "the tongues" as well as to prophecy. Hence we are not surprised to find that in some quarters it began to be looked on with disfavor. Some of the Corinthians would have forbidden it; and Paul has to exhort the Thessalonians not to "quench the Spirit." *R. B. Rackham.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The last verse of last Sunday's lesson stated that Paul dwelt at Corinth a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. While there he wrote his letters to the Thessalonians, and we pause in our study of Paul's active missionary work to consider some of his teaching as given in the first one of these letters.

See First Thessalonians, page 2 of this Guide.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. At the Council at Jerusalem, you remember, the apostles and elders wrote a letter to the Gentile churches in Syria and Cilicia telling them what was required of them. This is the first Christian letter that we hear about. When did it reach the people to whom it was written? Paul carried that letter to them, and other letters were carried by other Christian messengers, for there were no postoffices and public letter carriers in those days. The first emperor of Rome had his special messengers to carry his letters over the empire, and other emperors after him kept up these royal messengers. The great business companies had their own men who went from one place to another with their business letters. If you had lived at that time you could not have sent a letter to a friend in another city unless you owned a slave whom you could send with it, or could find some one who was going that way and was willing to take your letter for you and deliver it to your friend.

From what three Christian letters have four of our lessons been taken? Our last temperance lesson was from one of Paul's letters. Which one? From which of his letters is our lesson to-day? Name all the letters that Paul wrote. You must remember that the order in which they are printed in the Bible is not the order in which Paul wrote them. First Thessalonians is the eighth one in the list, but the first one that Paul wrote. In what city did the Thessalonians live? Where was Thessalonica? What lesson told us about Paul's work there?

For Older Pupils. Briefly review the lesson studied three weeks ago. Paul had earnestly longed to return to Thessalonica, but he had been "hindered by Satan." Perhaps he feared that Jason would be made to suffer if he appeared again in the city. A letter would not arouse the mob there as a speech would, and when he reached Corinth and had opportunity he wrote this first Epistle to the Thessalonians. In the first verse of our fourth chapter he exhorts them to live in a way pleasing to God, and in this and the last chapter are given the particulars of a godly life. Though the condition of life has greatly changed in the centuries that have passed since this letter was written, human nature has not changed, and these counsels are as applicable to us in our land in 1909 as it was to the Thessalonians in Asia Minor in 52.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Render not Evil for Evil

Coals of Fire. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but alway follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all. This thought Paul expresses again in Romans: Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good; and the way to do this he tells in Romans also—If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, "not to burn him, but to melt him." With the inborn desire for justice goes an inborn desire to render evil for

evil, to give as bad as one gets. Progress has been made in virtue when one is willing to refrain from returning evil, but such negative virtue is not enough, there must be the positive virtue of following after that which is good and returning good for evil.

A scurilous attack against Emperor Joseph was printed and broadly scattered throughout the German Empire. The Emperor ordered no pains to be spared to find its author. He was discovered and brought before his sovereign. "Are you the author of this disgraceful writing?" asked the Emperor as he held up a copy for him to see. The man had to acknowledge that he was. "Your pens are cut too sharp, I have had others cut for you of which you will make better use, I hope," said the Emperor, as he handed him a small package of quill pens. Overcome with shame the man received them, and was told that he could go free. On reaching his home and opening the package he found the pens wrapped in a paper which proved to be an imperial order for a pension. The Emperor had learned that the man was in most destitute circumstances, and he had in this way heaped coals of fire upon his head.

Overcome Evil with Good. Do not allow yourself to be overcome by the evil which another may do to you, but overcome that evil with the good which it is your duty to do even to your enemy. When a person wrongs us, one or other of two things must happen. Either we shall succeed in triumphing over the wrong done us, or that wrong will triumph over us. On the morning of a great battle, according to an old story, a Scottish chieftain brought his Highland regiment in front of the enemy, and said, "Now, my lads, there they are: if ye dinna ding them, they'll ding you." That is exactly what our text says about the wrongs that other people do us.

One day, when the horse of a good man in Massachusetts happened to stray into the road, a churlish neighbour put the animal into the public pound. Meeting the owner soon after, he told him what he had done, and added, "If I catch him in the road after this, I'll do just so again." "Neighbor," replied the other, "a night or two ago I looked out of my window, and saw your cattle in my meadow, and I drove them out and shut them in your yard; and if ever I catch them there at any other time, I'll do it again." The man was so struck with the reply that he at once took the horse out of the pound, and paid the charges himself. *Charles Jerdon,* in *Gospel Milk and Honey.*

The Enemy's Reasons. He is a babe indeed who has not yet learned the bliss of forgiving his enemy, the bliss of returning good for his evil. There are so many reasons for forgiving him, and all good ones. He may have a just cause of offence against us, and then, plainly, our business is not reprisals, but personal amendment. Nine times out of ten, hostility is an affair of misconception. "He threw the water not on me, but on the man he thought I was," was the calm comment of Archelaus of Macedon on the citizen who thus behaved to him. When abused for what is really foreign to our character the reply is to exhibit our true character. "Not to do likewise is the best revenge." Our enemy is never entirely our enemy. The best part of him is our friend, and the appeal of our highest to his highest will be precisely the help he needs in his conflict against himself. And amongst all the delights tasted by the epicures of sensation there is none with a more exquisite flavor than this of gaining, in the simple Christian way, the confidence and esteem of a brother who has been divided from us. *J. Brierley* in *Problems of Living.*

Love Your Enemies. It is hard for us not to meet hate with hate and scorn with scorn. It is hard for us to keep the narrow line that separates legitimate pain and sorrow at an enemy's enmity, from non-legitimate enmity and wrath. We are apt to give back to the world, and to men around us, the face with which they look upon us. But Jesus Christ has bidden us—and there is no wriggling out of the duty, hard at is may be—to meet enmity with love, and wrong with patient endurance. *Alexander Maclaren.*

Noblesse Oblige. However full of zeal and activity believers may be, and however deep-rooted in their belief, if they neglect certain fundamental duties, if their differences among themselves lead to bitterness and wranglings, their faith, be it ever so eloquently presented, will make little appeal to the unbelieving. These judge by works; and if you have not good understanding in your midst, if they perceive a dearth of brotherly love among you, to their

mind you are weighed and found wanting. History is full of sarcasms, thrown out by infidels and materialists against believers without Christian love; and wherever a believer rejects another believer, offends him, attacks him, wounds him, this unhappy saying is fulfilled:—The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. It is vain to talk, to preach, to write, to attack an age refractory to faith; you will not move it so; the vanity of your propaganda is easily seen. The great argument for the conversion of others is not to have beliefs superior to theirs, or to talk better than they; but it is to act better and to be better. When they see that you have attained to this, the adversaries of the faith themselves concede that there must be some reality in it. *Charles Wagner,* in *Justice.*

II Rejoice Always

St. Paul's and a Street Gamin's Teachings. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward, says Paul in the first one of all his letters, and then in his letter written to the Philippians when he was in prison at Rome and knew that a painful death might be near, he again said, "Rejoice in the Lord always," and added, urgently, "Again I will say, Rejoice." This was one of Paul's great principles; he knew himself how to be abased, and how to abound; in everything and in all things he had learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, and in whatsoever state he was therein not merely to be content but actually to rejoice.

A street gamin of San Francisco had learned the same wisdom. In the *Homiletic Review* Dr. Hillis quotes his words when rescued from the fire that followed the earthquake in that city: "Took a long time to git them things together," said the boy, waving his hand toward the blackened columns, "and just one day to put them out! Say, cap! 'tan't no use for a feller to think he can lick God! you can't do it. Just one thing to do—do the right thing, then take things jes' as they come, and act as if you waz glad!"

Rejoice in the Lord. Paul tells us to rejoice, and we know we ought to, and we want to, but it seems a challenge to powerlessness. There is too much to make us miserable. But when he tells us to rejoice in the Lord, he gives us a new idea. Hope comes to the rescue, and hope is not a fancy, but a prophecy, a force, with power for its own realization. An artist may be depressed as he sees how poorly he embodies his vision, but there is an unspeakable joy in the work; he glories in his dream. So, however much there is about me and in me to provoke despair, when I look to Jesus and see God's thought of me, see what He means me to be, and what I mean to be, I can not but rejoice in hope of the glory of God. *Maltbie D. Babcock,* in *Thoughts for Every-Day Living.*

The Source of Happiness. Is there such a thing as a "sour godliness"? Certain it is that many Christians fail to look upon good cheer as a Christian duty. "Why are the Christians melancholy men?" questioned a Hindu sage. "If I believed as they say they do, that the great God was my Father and that His Son was my Elder Brother, I should not groan though I lost a few bushels of wheat or even an eye. I should be of all men most happy and gay. They do not believe what they say." Was he right in his conclusion? Dr. W. L. Watkinson says that an advertisement for a companion printed in a South African paper asked for "A Christian; cheerful if possible." Evidently some people in India and in South Africa do not believe that many Christians are cheerful. Yet Dr. Babcock is right in saying that a Christian life that is joyless is a discredit to God and a disgrace to itself. Joy, prayer, and thankfulness (verses 16-8) are as much a duty as faith, hope, and love.

An evangelist and a noted singer were holding special meetings in a New England city. The pastor of one of the churches asked them to visit a "shut-in," who had not left her bed for sixteen years, and had never known a moment free from pain in that time. She was a merry girl when sickness came upon her, and she had remained cheery and bright through it all. The singer dreaded the visit; what could he sing to such a sufferer? But when he asked her what song she would like to hear, she replied, "Sing 'There is sunshine in my soul.'" It was with deep emotion that he sang to this sufferer these words:

"Oh, there's sunshine, blessed sunshine,
When the peaceful, happy moments roll;
When Jesus shows His shining face,
There is sunshine in the soul."

She knew the source of soul-sunshine. Happiness comes from within, not from without.

The Duty of Happiness. Life is a school; labor and sorrow, victory and defeat, toil together as teachers, but happiness is the graduating point. Even of Him whose name is above every name, it is said, that for the joy that was set before Him He endured His cross. If righteousness, therefore, is the supreme end and aim of life, happiness is the reward thereof.

He who seeks to do God's will first, who puts duty before pleasure, and ranks others before himself, can not escape the glow of happiness that comes from the sense of God's approval. The art of living justly and kindly with one's fellows, then, is not more important than the art of maintaining for oneself the sense of joy and victory over life's troubles. The duty of self-denial is not more imperative than the duty of delight. What ripeness is to the orange, what sweet song is to the lark, what culture and refinement are to the intellect, that happiness is to man. As vulgarity and ignorance proclaim the neglected mind, so fear, unhappiness, and misery proclaim the neglected heart. *Newell Dwight Hillis,* in *The Quest of Happiness.*

An Optimist. If I regarded my life from the point of view of the pessimist, I should be undone. I should seek in vain for the light that does not visit my eyes and the music that does not ring in my ears. I should sit apart in awful solitude, a prey to fear and despair. But since I consider it a duty to myself and to others to be happy, I escape a misery worse than any physical deprivation, and if I am happy in spite of my deprivations, if my happiness is so deep that it is a faith, so thoughtful that it becomes a philosophy of life, if, in short, I am an optimist, my testimony to the creed of optimism is worth hearing. As sinners stand up in meeting and testify to the goodness of God, so one who is afflicted may rise up in gladness of conviction and testify to the goodness of life. *Helen Keller,* in *Optimism.*

Train the Thoughts. The Christian life ought to be joyful because it is hopeful. Many of us do not habitually recognize that joy is a Christian duty, but think that it is partly a matter of temperament and partly a product of circumstances. We naturally rejoice when things go well with us. If we have sunny dispositions we think it so much the better, if not, so much the worse, but it is not our fault. But do we recognize that a Christian who is not joyful is not living up to his duty, and that neither temperament nor circumstances excuse our not being so?

Our emotions are not immediately in the power of our wills, but the direction of our thoughts is. We can not resolve to be joyful, but we can choose which set of facts we will look at, whether those which tend to sadden or those which tend to make glad. If we prefer to occupy our mind with the troubles, losses, disappointments, hard work, blighted hopes, of this poor sin-ridden world, of course sadness will come over us often, and a general grey hue will be the usual tone of our lives, as it is of the lives of many of us, broken only by occasional bursts of foolish mirth and empty laughter. But if we choose to turn away from all these, to sun ourselves in the beams of the yet unrisen Light, which we can do, then, having rightly chosen the subjects to think upon, the feeling will come as a matter of course. We can carry our own atmosphere with us, like the people in Italy, who in frosty weather will be seen sitting in the market-place by their stalls with a dish of embers, which they grasp in their hands and so make themselves comfortably warm on the bitterest day. We can bring a reasonable degree of warmth into the coldest weather if we will lay hold of the vessel in which the fire is, and keep it in our hand and close to our hearts. Choose what to think of, and feelings will follow thoughts. But strong and continuous effort is necessary if we are to keep the great Hope before us. We can sometimes see the gleaming mountains of the mainland from our island home; but thick days of mist are frequent, when we discern nothing but the cold grey sea breaking mournfully on the cold grey stones. But we can scatter the mists if we will, and behold the fair

land across the straits. If Christians cultivated the vision of their great future more, they would be more joyful. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Leaves from the Tree of Life.*

III Missionary Topic Esteem them for their Work's Sake

A Missionary's Work. "We beseech you, brethren," wrote Paul to the Thessalonians, "to know them that labor among you and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake."

"Have you ever heard the gospel preached?" a native of China was asked. "No," he replied, "but I have seen it. I know a man who used to be the terror of his neighborhood. If you gave him a hard word he would shout at you, and curse you for two days and nights without stopping. He was as dangerous as a wild beast, and a bad opium smoker. But when the religion of Jesus took hold of him he became changed. He was gentle, moral, not soon angry, and he has finally left off opium. Truly the teaching is good and the teachers are good." This Chinese had obeyed Paul's counsel, he esteemed the missionaries for their work's sake.

An Endorsement. We wish to recognize the valuable services rendered by Christian missionaries toward mitigating the horrors of famine in India. Honor to these ambassadors of Christ! They have proved themselves to be worthy followers of Him whose heart bled for the sorrows of men. For the last six months every mission state in the Central Provinces and in many parts of the Western Presidency was converted into a relief camp. The missionary workers did not know rest, but were out day and night relieving distress and saving lives. The strain was so severe that one of these workers writes: "Every mission in these parts has lost at least one English worker by death, and ours one each month for the last four months." Not only did these workers offer themselves as a sacrifice, but money also flowed freely for the relief of distress from Christian centers in this country and abroad. This humanity of Jesus' followers, and not their dogmas, will surely establish the throne of their Master on the love and reverence of civilized humanity. Let all classes of Indian society record their admiration of these worthy servants of Christ in unstinted measure. *Indian Messenger.*

Missionaries are Heroes. The missionaries of China are a body of men and women who, measured by the sacrifices they make, the trials they endure, and the risks they take, are veritable heroes. They are the pioneers. They are invariably the forerunners of western civilization. It is they, who, armed with the Bible and school books, and sustained by a faith which gives them unflinching courage, have penetrated the darkest interior of four great empires, hitherto unvisited by foreigners, and blazed the way for the oncoming commerce and trade. The dim pathways which they traced, sometimes marking them with their life's blood, are rapidly becoming lined with school-houses and railway stations, where hitherto were found only idolatrous shrines and lodging houses for wheelbarrow men and pack mules. Thousands of splendid schools have been founded, and are now being most successfully taught by these good men and women, and it is a fact in which we may all take great pride, that 95 per cent of the Protestant schools in China have been established by Americans. *Edwin H. Conger, United States Minister to China and Mexico.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

You are not very holy if you are not very kind. *Bonar.*

The most frequent source of human unhappiness is the overlooking of the nearness of joy. *James Buckham.*

It is a comely fashion to be glad;
Joy is the grace we say to God. *Jean Ingelow.*

To be happy is really the first step to being pious. *Robert Louis Stevenson.*

Cultivate forbearance till your heart yields a fine crop of it. *Spurgeon.*

A good man is like the sandal-wood tree; as it leaves a part of its fragrance on the axe, so he leaves his blessing with the enemy. *East Indian Proverb.*

It is always easy to forgive other people's enemies. *Henry Frederick Cope.*

The true way to overcome evil is to melt it with fiery coals of gentleness; an iceberg may be crushed to powder, but every fragment is still ice, only sunshine will melt it and turn it into sweet water. *Alexander Maclaren.*

Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Rom. 12.9.

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not. Isa. 35.3, 4.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

The lesson is crowded with exhortations to right living, all of which are needed now as much as in Paul's day. Which one do you most need to keep in mind?

An evangelist recommends his hearers to take their Bibles and underline every precept in the New Testament which they have never thought of obeying. How many precepts in this lesson would you have to underline? Do you criticize your pastor for the things in which he does not meet your expectations, and do you fail to honor and esteem him for his many good qualities, and the good work he accomplishes? Do you justly respect and honor those in authority over you? Are your kindly in your reproof of those whom it is right for you to reprove? Do you take pains to encourage and help others, and are you forbearing towards others' faults? Do you ever return evil for evil? Do you always do that which is good? Do you recognize that joy is a Christian virtue? Do you neglect your prayer life? Can you thank God for trouble as well as for blessing? Are you so engrossed with worldly things that you can not give heed to things spiritual? Do you despise prophesyings? Do you firmly hold the Christian beliefs which you have examined and found true? Can you keep from every form of evil?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

I urge you, my brothers, wrote Paul to the Thessalonians, to have a high regard for those Christian workers who labor among you, to esteem them highly for the work they do. Live peacefully together. Reprove kindly those who need reproof, encourage the despondent, give help to the weak, be forbearing toward all. Return not evil for evil, but do good to all. It is Christ's will that you should rejoice always, live a prayerful life, and give thanks to God for whatever He sends. Do nothing that will make God's voice in your soul less clear and distinct; give heed to instructions; prove all things and hold fast what is good; avoid every form of evil. And then Paul closed his letter with a prayer for his readers' sanctification and an assurance that God would sanctify them.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, the occasion, purpose, date and analysis of each.
2. Respect for those in authority.
3. Prove all things; faith, not credulity.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Where was Ephesus? 2. Where had Paul been between his work at Corinth and at Ephesus? (Acts 18.18-23; 19.1.) 3. Name the places in order that were visited by Paul on his second missionary journey. 4. Read Paul's account to the Ephesian elders of his stay in Ephesus. (Acts 20.17-35.) 5. What Epistle did Paul write from Ephesus? (1 Cor. 16.5-9.) 6. What is meant by "the Way," verse 9? In what earlier lesson did this expression occur? (Third lesson of second quarter.) 7. What is said in Acts about the belief in power wrought by Peter that may be compared with the belief in the power wrought by Paul, verse 12? (Acts 5.15.) 8. What did Paul say about his working miracles, in Rom. 15.18, 19; 2 Cor. 12.12? 9. When before had Paul come in contact with magicians? (Acts 8.9-24; 13.6-12; 16.16-22.) 10. What does Paul say in Acts 26.20 that he preached as the final test of repentance?

LESSON VII—AUGUST 15

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY—EPHESUS

Read Acts 18.23-19.22. Commit verses 19, 20.

Golden Text

The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Acts 19.17.

LESSON TEXT Acts 19.8-20

8 And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading *as to* the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; 12 insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out. 13 But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them that had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. 19 And not a few of them that practised magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

8. *He entered into the synagogue.* Where he had before received a welcome, Acts 18.19, 20.

9. *The Way.* See Lesson III of the 2d Quarter, Acts 9.2.—*He separated the disciples.* As he had done at Corinth, Acts 18.7.

10. *Two years.* This note of time probably does not include the three months preaching in the synagogue, nor the events that occurred after verse 20. See Acts 20.31. See Paul's account of this period in Acts 20.17-35.—*All they that dwelt in Asia heard the word.* Though the expression is hyperbolical, Paul's associates must have made wide preaching tours from Ephesus, and multitudes of Jews and Gentiles who came to Ephesus for commerce and for the worship of Diana must have heard Paul.

12. *Handkerchiefs and aprons.* "The *sudaria* used to wipe the sweat from the workman's face and the *semicircula* or short workman's apron" (*Bartlet*).

13. *Exorcists.* Those who claim to expel evil spirits by the use of a magical formula.—*Adjure.* Charge, solemnly command.

14. *A chief priest.* "It is not certain whether he had been one of the chief priests, that is, chief of the twenty-four priestly courses at Jerusalem, or was an apostate Jew and one of the priests of Diana. The Greek word rendered *chief priest* was not only in general use among the heathen, but occurs repeat-

DIANA OR CHRIST

edly on coins and other inscriptions relating to the worship of Diana at Ephesus" (*Abbott*). "One of the chief of the Ephesian Jews—perhaps one of the chief rulers of the synagogue" (*Gloag*).

15. *Know.* "Two different Greek verbs are rendered by the same English verb *know;* it may be rendered, I know who Jesus is, and as for Paul I am acquainted with him."

18. *Many.* "The *many* of verse 18 are the dupes, those who had consulted the wizards; the *many* of verse 19 are the wizards themselves" (*Abbott*).

19, 20. *Books.* Parchment rolls.—*Fifty thousand pieces of silver.* The silver coin was a drachma, worth about sixteen cents in our money. As a drachma was the common pay for a day's labor, the total sum of $8,000 should be multiplied many times to represent its real value in our money.—*So.* In this way.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

11. *Special miracles.* The whole subject bristles with difficulties, since we do not even know how far Paul countenanced the particular cases mentioned in verse 12. That Paul was conscious of being on occasion the medium of superhuman energies we know from his own unimpeachable witness (Rom. 15.18; 2 Cor. 12.12): and it is certain that what are mentioned after "inasmuch that" are not meant to exhaust the "powers" wrought through him in Ephesus. Paul himself would surely have discouraged such un-ethical and magical methods, so alien to "faith" as he understood its saving virtue. But, without his knowing, the zeal of fresh converts and others conveyed to the sick in body and mind objects which, having been in contact with his person, had relative to the crude but intense faith and expectancy of the recipients a healing value. Such cures, Luke, on the standards of his age, had no reason to regard as less supernatural or divine in origin than those in which higher faith was present, both in the patient and in Paul himself. What exactly Paul thought in the matter we do not know. *J. Vernon Bartlett,* in *The New Century Bible.*

17. *The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.* Jews and Greeks alike had been wont to use strangely varied names and spells; but now it became known to all, to Jews and Greeks alike, that the name of Jesus was the name of the Lord, a name not only to be heard but to be magnified. To mark this unique power of the name of Jesus is the object of the startling episode introduced by St. Luke, and it is no small proof of the truth of the incident that it stops where it does; that, in other words, it establishes the pre-eminence of the name of Jesus; but it adds nothing further to satisfy curiosity as to the victims of a strange and masterful power of evil. *R. J. Knowling,* in *The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ.*

18. *They brought their books and burned them.* The probability is that had they waited till the morrow there would not have been a man that would have burned a book. They were wise enough to take advantage of the impulse to reform when it was on them. Never lose a minute in taking advantage of an opportunity to act in the direction of a higher good or a nobler manhood. Never lose a minute in doing right when the right way is presented to you. Second thoughts are treason when an impulse is generous; and when it is base, cruel, second thoughts are angels of salvation. Never act off-hand when action is wrong; stop and think; but never fail to act quickly when it is right. *H. W. Beecher.*

19. *Magical arts.* The secret of magic lies in the disparity between the means used and the ends attained. Investigation of universal elements has released more genii than magicians ever set free, and modern study of nature has made the old wonder tales, which were fashioned in the world's childhood, tame and commonplace. But the magic used by intelligence in dealing with things is not so impressive as the magic with which intelligence transforms conditions in the working out of human lives. The story of such a career as Edison's is more wonderful than the story of his discoveries and inventions, although the latter are an authentic modern Arabian Night's entertainment; while the career of Lincoln, when one compares the poverty of his youth with the majesty of his service to the race and the splendor of his world-wide fame, is more marvellous than any tale of magic ever recited to eager listeners in ancient Bagdad or Damascus. *Hamilton Wright Mabie,* in *The Life of the Spirit.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

19. *Those that practiced magical arts.* In traveling through Palestine, one notices the superstition that reigns in the life of the Hebrew as well as of the Gentile. Be a man ever so versed in religious matters, he still resorts to the belief in necromancy, and in matters of import advises with fortune-tellers, clairvoyants, and wizards. The Mohammedans use their string of beads, or rosary, something after the childish inquiry made in civilization with the daisy, by pulling out the petals, commencing with "He loves me, he loves me not"; so they commence "Successful, not successful," and the last bead tells them what they desire to know. There are many men and women in Palestine who have made themselves rich by this nefarious business of telling fortunes.

At the door of mosques, or even churches and synagogues, we see men and sometimes old women who have passed three-score years and ten, seated on a little rug or mat, in front of them a tray covered with sand about half an inch deep, in which they draw squares and write cabalistic letters, by which they pretend to tell past and present events, and to discover lost articles. They have perfect liberty in plying their trade, and are never given up as false pretenders to the government, for as a rule, these people profess to be highly religious and when they have no customer you notice their lips moving continually, their heads shaking and nodding as if in devotion and prayer.

There is not a child in any Hebrew family in Palestine but wears sewed on his cap, or hanging around his neck, a little silver or copper locket enclosing a slip of parchment or paper written in cabalistic letters, insuring him against accidents of all kinds. Grown men and women carry around on their bodies, usually hanging from the neck, little pieces of alum engraved with letters, or shreds of cloth procured from some shrine, believing in the efficiency of their saving power. *Gamahliel Ward-el-Ward,* in *Palestine Through the Eyes of a Native.*

11. *Brought their books.* In those days "books" were parchment scrolls laboriously written by hand. Probably there were few copies of the magicians' books, and their rarity increased their value. They contained the cabalistic sentences, the "Ephesian letters" or mysterious symbols employed by magicians. Sometimes the "Ephesian letters" were used as an amulet. Suidas, a Greek writer, says that when Milesius and Ephesius wrestled at the Olympic games, Milesius could not prevail, because his antagonist had the *Ephesian letters* bound to his heel; when this was discovered, and the letters taken away, it is reported that Milesius threw him thirty times.

A terra-cotta specimen of "Ephesian Letters" now in the museum at Syracuse, Italy. The figure in the center represents Diana of Ephesus. The inscription is designedly unreadable.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When Paul left Corinth he sailed from the port of Cenchreæ for Syria. He first crossed the Ægean and stopped at Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila, who left Corinth with him, remained there for awhile, but Paul continued his journey after receiving a favorable reception in the synagogue where he preached, and promising to return if God willed. He took ship for Cæsarea, went up to Jerusalem and saluted the Church there, and then went on to Antioch in Syria. This rounds out the second of his missionary journeys into which it is convenient and customary to divide his travels. At Antioch he spent "some time." Professor Ramsay believes that now he wrote his Epistle to the Galatians; others date this letter towards the end of his return visit to Ephesus, or shortly after.

For the last time Paul started forth from Antioch, on this, his third missionary journey as we term it; which lasted from 52 to 56 A. D. See page 19 of this Guide. Passing through Tarsus and the Cilician Gates he revisited in order the churches he had founded in the region of Galatia and Phrygia,—Derbe,

Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch—and "established all the disciples." See the map, page 304.

Meanwhile Apollos, an eloquent Alexandrian Jew, came to Ephesus and taught in the Synagogue. While what he taught about Jesus was accurate, his knowledge was limited, he knew "only the baptism of John." Priscilla and Aquila instructed him further. Armed with letters from the brethren he crossed into Achaia and greatly helped the Church at Corinth.

From Antioch in Pisidia Paul continued his journey to Ephesus. His first work was to instruct twelve "John the Baptist's disciples," who were then "baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" and received the Holy Spirit. Paul remained at Ephesus probably from A. D. 54 to A. D. 57, a longer time than in any other city which he visited on his missionary tours. During this time he wrote First Corinthians, and possibly organized the Churches of Colossæ and Hierapolis, and others besides Ephesus of the "Seven Churches" in Asia (Rev. 1.11).

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It had a harbor at the mouth of the river Cayster, nearly opposite the island of Samos, and carried on a great commerce. Ephesus and Smyrna, forty miles apart, were called "the eyes of Asia." Ephesus was especially famed for one of "the seven wonders of the world," the temple of Artemis or Diana. At Ephesus St. John spent his last years.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Is a school a place of leisure? Leisure is the original meaning of the Greek word, *scholé,* from which our word *school* is derived. The way in which it came into use is interesting. All Greek cities had their "gymnasia" which were originally intended for exercise and athletic sports. There one found running and wrestling grounds, gardens and walks. The Greeks lived out of doors more than we do, and it became the custom for a philosopher or grammarian or poet to go regularly to a gymnasium and, gathering about himself a group of listeners, either stand in a corner and talk, or walk up and down and talk. It became a favorite way of killing time to listen to such teachers. Halls and colonnades were built and seats provided for such discourses. The important work of the day was over at noon, and the leisure time was spent in these places of recreation, hence the word *scholé* was given to such discourses, and then to the place where the discourses were given. After all, *leisure time* is not an unfitting word to use for our places of instruction, for you scholars go to school during your years of leisure, when there is nothing else so important for you to do as to spend your time in learning.

Ephesus was a Greek city on the Ægean coast of that peninsula which we now call Asia Minor. There in the school of Tyrannus, which may well have been in one of the five gymnasia of the city, Paul "reasoned daily" for two years. Where had he been since he left Corinth? Turn to your maps and trace his course.

For Older Pupils. One of the most frequent changes met with in the Revised Version is the word *Jehovah* instead of the word *LORD* printed in small capitals, of the Authorized Version. Our word *Lord* is a contraction of the Saxon word *laford* (originally *hlaford*), and means *ruler* or *governor.* As used in the Authorized Version it translates several Hebrew and Greek words not of the same meaning, some of them being applied to men as well as to the Almighty. Where it translates the Hebrew word that is used exclusively as a name of the Almighty, the "memorial name," it is (with a few exceptions) printed in small capitals in the Authorized Version, and in the Revised Version is rendered Jehovah. In the French translation of this name the word used means *the Eternal.*

The Jews never pronounced the Hebrew word for Jehovah, it was too sacred. Jewish exorcists were sometimes called "Masters of the Name" because by

pronouncing the Hebrew word for Jehovah in a peculiar way, they claimed to perform miracles. Paul came into contact with such exorcists at Ephesus

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Confession

Confession at Ephesus and at Shanghai. The failure of the attempt made by the Jewish exorcists to cure a demon-possessed by naming over him the name of the Lord Jesus, resulted in increased reverence for that name among Jews and Gentiles alike. It also led to a reformation in the Church. Many believers of their own accord openly confessed that they had failed to abandon practices which they now saw were both senseless and evil. Their confession was made to themselves; they did not try to excuse themselves for trying to be both Christians and heathens, but fully admitted that they had been doing wrong. Their confession was made to others; in this way they strengthened their own purpose of giving up such practices in the future, and did what they could to efface the influence of their example.

Two years ago in the Chinese and English daily papers of Shanghai this confession was printed: "I, the undersigned, a piece-goods merchant of Shanghai, desire to notify the public that I have been guilty of a grave offence; namely, that I have purchased from Messrs. Welch, Lewis & Co., from time to time, a quantity of Turkey red piece goods, known to the trade as the "flowers and screen" chop, that I have sold the same to one Dong Sing with the full knowledge that he would remove the tickets for that chop and affix instead forged tickets for a chop known to the trade as the "Gold Dragon" chop, the exclusive property of Messrs. Welch, Lewis & Co., and used by them for the better quality of these goods. In consequence, Dong Sing has been able to sell the inferior goods bearing the better quality ticket at a considerable profit. I desire now to atone for my offence, and have this day paid to various local charities, through Messrs Welch, Lewis & Co., the sum of Tls. 6,000, and I also undertake not to engage in any more dishonest practices. Henry Chic."

This notice was sent to "The Spirit of Missions" by a medical missionary with the comment that it is rare for a big Chinese merchant to prove dishonest, and this man's method of publishing his notice and paying about $4,200 to charities, does him great credit.

To whom Confession should be made. Confession between human beings ought always to have a distinctly good purpose, or needed end, in view. It may be neccessary for the righting of a wrong done to another. It may be desirable for the strengthening of oneself or for the helpful encouragement of another. If its purpose is solely for self-help, then any one may fairly consider whether he has any right to burden another with the confession. And when no injury has been done which would be righted or even helped by a confession, and when there would seem to be no gain to any one, self or neighbor, in a confession, there would seem to be no reason for believing that God wishes such confession to be made by one person to another.

Confession to God is wholly different. God can forgive and pardon and blot out a sin as no human friend can. Every sin is a sin against God, a wronging of God. He knows all about our every sin, to be sure; but He can not forgive our sins unless we confess them to Him. For our own sakes He asks us to do this. In order to make possible a restored relationship with the One whom we have injured, who knows of the injury, He asks that we recognize the cause of the trouble frankly in His presence, and, in asking for forgiveness, make possible the pardon that He longs to bestow. Let us thank a loving Father for the privilege of full confession. *Sunday School Times.*

II Burning Bridges

Putting Temptation out of the Way. A Scotch laddie had been forbidden to swim in the river because of its dangerous pools. He came home one day, however, with unmistakable signs of having disobeyed. His excuse was that he was "tempted so badly." "How did it happen that you had your bathing suit with you?" his mother questioned. "Well, Mother," said the boy, "I took my bathing suit along with me because I thought that perhaps I might be tempted."

Evidently the magicians of Ephesus feared that they might be tempted to make use of their magical formulas, and instead of taking them along with them in case they were, they destroyed them. They made a costly sacrifice when they burned their "books"; perhaps twenty thousand dollars, estimating the value in the purchasing power of our money, went up in smoke. Each owner not only gave up a fortune, but in putting out of his way the temptation to continue his trade, he gave up his means of making a living. Why this waste? Why were not the books given to those who had no scruples about making use of them? Why were they not preserved as valuable curiosities for future ages? The magicians would not only put temptation to do evil out of their own way, but out of the way of others as well. If it was wrong for them to use such books, it was wrong for others. If a publisher of evil literature should decide to give up his business because he had become a Christian, would you think him very sincere if he sold out his stock and his interests to another publisher who would not scruple to continue the work? The Ephesian magicians proved the sincerity of their repentance.

Jim's Way. Christianity has transforming power. One who has led an evil life and then has become a true Christian will alter his purposes and habits and will put away from him all temptations to former evil practices. A baggageman named Jim knew how to put one sort of temptation out of his way. He owned a number of game roosters, and one morning he cut off all their heads. When he told his wife what he had done, she said they were too old to cook, and she could not see why he had done so foolish a thing. "I don't care," said Jim, "I haven't any use for them any longer. I used to take a couple of them out in a lot where people would see them Sunday mornings on their way to church, and then I would fight them for all they were worth. I'm none too strong anyway, and so I thought that if I killed the roosters no fellow could come along some Sunday morning and say, 'Come, Jim, put a couple of them in a bag, and let's go and fight them.' If they're dead, I can't go, can I?"

A Modern Sorceress. In Korea a woman who had been a *mutang,* or sorceress, for many years, experienced a desire to become a follower of Christ. When she was told that she must first destroy all the things she had used as a *mutang,* she brought them all into the courtyard and burned them. This was many months ago, and she has been faithful to her new belief.

Proof of Sincerity. There is no Christian life that has not in it sacrifice, and that alone is the sacrifice which is made in the spirit of the conflagration of the "Ephesian letters," without reserve, without hesitation, without insincere tenderness. If the slave-holder, convinced of the iniquity of the traffic in man, sells the slaves on his estate to the neighboring planter, the mark of sincerity is wanting; or if the trader in opium or in spirits quits his nefarious commerce, but first secures the value of all that remains in his warehouse or in his shops, again there is something which betokens the want of a heart true and honest. *F. W. Robertson.*

III Missionary Topic Magical Arts

The Testimony of Josephus. In the "strolling Jews, exorcists," who wandered from one place to another, claiming to be able to expel evil spirits, and in those who practiced "magical arts," we have a glimpse of the beliefs and practices which have always prevailed in Eastern lands. Such men claimed that they held communication with the spirit world, and by some act or the use of some word they could obtain the help of superior spirits to do their will. According to Josephus, "Solomon left behind him the manner of using exorcisms by which demons are driven away so that they never return; and this manner of cure is of great force unto this day," and he describes the way in which a certain Eleazar "released people." "He put a ring that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down, immediately he adjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantation that he had composed."

In Africa. In a letter from the Bechuana land of Africa Livingstone wrote: "The doctor and the rainmaker among these people are one and the same

person. As I did not like to be behind my professional brethren, I declared I could make rain, too, not, however, by enchantments, like them, but by leading out their river for irrigation. The idea pleased, and we went to work. Even the chief's own doctor is at it, and works like a good fellow, laughing heartily at the cunning of the "foreigner" who can make rain so. We have only one spade, and this is without a handle; and yet by means of sticks sharpened to a point we have performed all the digging of a pretty long canal. Many verily believe that I am a great wizard. Those who do not love, fear me, and so truly in their eyes am I possessed of supernatural power that some have not hesitated to affirm that I am capable of even raising the dead!"

A missionary on the Upper Congo, W. R. Welch, gives in a recent number of *Regions Beyond* this account: "One night, as I lay awake I heard a drum note ringing out from the direction of the settlement of the Ngombes. After awhile the beating ceased. A short interval and then some one beat out a return signal. I surmised that some news was being conveyed, since this is their method of "wiring." The next morning I asked the reason, and learned this. About a fortnight previously a death had taken place in a Ngombe village, a death attributed to witchcraft. Suspicion fastened upon a woman. The poor creature, knowing the cruel fate awaiting her, fled to the forest and remained in hiding ten days. Before I heard the signalling she had been captured. That was the news given, with this in addition, that she was forthwith put to death.

This is one example of untold numbers whose lives are sacrificed at the altar of these fearful superstitions—superstitions believed in as firmly by those people as the Gospel is by us. God alone knows the number of those who fall victims to these cruelties, and the number will go on increasing until we replace superstition by the faith of Jesus Christ, and teach men a respect for life based on the estimate of God.

A Missionary's Experience. In Sophia Lyon Fah's book, "Uganda's White Man of Work," there is an account of the conflict that Mr. Mackay had with King Mutesa of Uganda in regard to a wizard. The arguments that Mr. Mackay used he thus recorded in his diary: "I turned over the Scriptures from Exodus to Revelations, reading a host of passages to show the mind of God toward dealers in witchcraft. The laws of God to Moses, the examples of Saul and Ahaziah, the manifestation of our Lord to destroy the works of the devil, the Acts of the Apostles—especially the case of Elymas—the works of the flesh contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians, fifth chapter, and, finally, the list of those who may not enter through the gates of the heavenly city (Rev. 22.15). I was glad to hear one of the chiefs say that the passages read were enough to set the matter at rest, and there could be no more dispute as to the unlawfulness of witchcraft."

It was difficult, however, to convince the king, and many conferences were held in regard to the subject of witchcraft. One morning the missionary's heart was gladdened by an unusual event. His regular pupils were with him and also several wizards and worshippers of the spirits, when a wizard arose and exclaimed, "I will cast off these charms of the spirits, whom I will never again serve. They are liars and cheats. I will follow Jesus and His ways." With these words he threw all his charms and his priest's robes into the fire.

SENTENCE SERMONS

The fortune-teller knows not his own fate. *Japanese Saying.*

A true repentance shuns the evil itself. *Shakespeare.*

Converting grace demands confession: a fire kindled in a stove reports itself; concealment is impossible. *T. L. Cuyler.*

The amends for the past which we can make will be to add to the past no more past for which amends are needed. *Robert E. Speer.*

Religion has to steer between a superstitiousness that sees the magically supernatural everywhere, and a materialistic realism that sees God nowhere. *Henry Churchill King.*

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1.9.

Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance. Matt. 3.8.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Many people do not wish to know themselves. Unlike the believers at Ephesus, they will not confess to themselves that some of their practices are inconsistent with their Christian profession.

I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, said the Prodigal Son; I am no more worthy to be called thy son. All sin is a sin against one's better self, against those whom the sin harms, and against one's righteous Judge; and must be confessed to be forgiven.

When Evan Roberts was asked for a special message for the Welsh churches, he replied; Abandon all known sin, renounce all doubtful indulgences, promptly obey the Spirit, and publicly confess Christ. This is what the Ephesian magicians did. Every Christian has some sacrifice to make, some things to be burned when he purposes with sincerity of heart to lead a wholly Christian life. Have we made our bonfires?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

After preaching for three months in the synagogue at Ephesus, Paul was obliged to break with the Jews, for many of them publicly denounced him and his gospel. With his followers he went to the school of Tyrannus and there labored for two years with so great success that the influence of his preaching extended throughout the province of Asia, both among the Jews and the Greeks.

Miracles wrought by Paul convinced the people that God was manifesting His power through him, and the sick and demon-possessed were cured, as they believed, by means of handkerchiefs and aprons brought to them from Paul. Some of the wandering Jewish exorcists, among them the seven sons of Sceva, doubtless heard Paul bid evil spirits depart in the name of Jesus Christ, and listening thought they had gained the secret, a new name to conjure with. On one occasion two of the sons of Sceva attempted to cure a demon-possessed by naming over him the name of "Jesus whom Paul preacheth," but with poor success. The demon-possessed said scornfully, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but ye, who are ye?" and then attacked them furiously, tearing their garments and wounding them so that they made their escape with difficulty. This event made a deep impression on all. Jews and Greeks were over-awed and the name of Jesus was magnified. Many of the believers came and confessed that they had been guilty of evil practices, and many professional magicians proved the sincerity of their intention of giving up their arts by bringing the scrolls containing their secrets, and publicly burning them. These scrolls could have been sold for fifty thousand pieces of silver. In this way grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Modern "Ephesian letters"—the arts of fortune-telling, clairvoyance, and spiritualism.

2. The need of burning the bad books of to-day.

See "The Moral Menace of Yellow Journalism," by Professor W. L. Thomas, in the *American Magazine*, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What were the so-called "Seven Wonders of the World"? 2. Find out what you can about the Temple of Diana at Ephesus. 3. How did Paul injure the business of Demetrius? 4. What had Paul said to the Athenians about worshipping idols? (Fourth lesson of this quarter.) 5. Describe the riot at Ephesus. 6. Is anything known about Aristarchus? (See the Subject-Index of your Bible.) 7. What others of Paul's companions in travel have you already heard about? (Acts 13.2, 5; 15.40; 16.1, 3; 18.18; 19.22. See also Acts 20.34 and 2 Cor. 8.16-19.) 8. When before had disciples kept Paul out of danger? (Acts 9.23-25, 30; 17.10, 14.) 9. Give in your own words the speech of the town-clerk. 10. What does Paul say about the troublous times at Ephesus in Acts 20.18, 19; 1 Cor. 15.32; 16.9; 2 Cor. 1.8?

LESSON VIII—AUGUST 22

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY—THE RIOT IN EPHESUS

Read Acts 19.23-20.1. Commit verse 26.

Golden Text

He hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. II Cor. 12.9.

LESSON TEXT Acts 19.23-30, 35-41

23 And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; 25 whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. 26 And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they are no gods, that are made with hands: 27 and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard this they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. 29 And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. 30 And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not....

35 And when the townclerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. 37 For ye have brought *hither* these men, who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another. 39 But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. 40 For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause *for it;* and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

23. *About that time.* Near the close of Paul's stay in Ephesus, Acts 20.1.—*The Way.* Christianity. Acts 19.9; 16.6.

26. *Almost throughout all Asia.* Compare verse 10.—*This Paul.* Spoken contemptuously.—*They are no gods, that are made with hands.* Compare 17.29; 14.15.

29. *Gaius.* Gaius was a common Roman name; nothing more is known about this one. For Aristarchus see Acts 20.4; 27.2; Col. 4.10; Philemon 24.

35. *Of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?* The legend that Diana, and others of their gods, fell down from *heaven* (R. V. M.), may perhaps be traced, Dr. Abbott suggests, to the fall of remarkable meteoric stones. Priests would say that the image was a gift from Jupiter.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

24. *Silver shrines.* The innumerable worshippers of the goddess required innumerable dedicatory offerings of the style which was most likely to please her. A great city erected a great shrine with a colossal statue of the goddess, private individuals propitiated her with miniature shrines, containing embodiments of her living presence. The vast temple near Ephesus and the tiny terra-cotta shrine were equally acceptable to Artemis, she accepted from her votaries offerings according to their means. She dwelt neither in the vast temple nor in the tiny terra-cotta: she was implicit in the life of nature, she was the reproductive power that kept the great world ever the same amid the constant flux of things. Mother of all and nurse of all, she was most really present wherever the unrestrained life of nature was most freely manifested, in the woods, on the mountains, among the wild beasts. Her worshippers expressed their devotion and their belief in her omnipresence by offering shrines to her, and doubtless by keeping shrines of the same kind in their own homes, certainly also by placing such shrines in graves beside the corpse, as a sign that the dead had once more gone back to the mother who bore them. The temple and the sacred precinct were crowded with dedications; and the priests often cleared away the old and especially the worthless offerings to make room for new gifts. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Church in the Roman Empire.*

25. *Workmen of like occupation.* When we consider the immense and widespread influence of the Ephesian Artemis, we must acknowledge that vast numbers of pilgrims coming even from considerable distances, continually visited her shrine, and that vast numbers of "naoi" were needed to supply the unceasing demand. Workers in marble and workers in terra-cotta drove a thriving trade through their connection with the temple, and this connection was directed and organized by Demetrius, evidently as guild master. The author sums up these tradesmen in the phrase, "the workmen of like occupation." The silversmiths were, of course, the craft of higher standing, greater skill in delicate work, larger profits, and therefore greater wealth and influence, than the potters and marble-workers. How natural, then, it is that it should be a silversmith who gathered together a meeting of the associated trades and organized a disturbance! The less educated workmen followed the lead of the great artisan. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Church in the Roman Empire.*

A Silversmith. From an Engraved Gem.

31. *Certain also of the Asiarchs being his friends.* From the presence of the Asiarchs at Ephesus, it has been plausibly inferred that it was the season of the celebration of the games in honor of Diana. These Ephesian games occurred in the month of May; and the month itself was called Artemision in honor of the goddess. *Paton J. Gloag.*

The conduct of the festivals and games fell to the president of the diet, in Asia the Asiarch, in Bithynia the Bithyniarch, and so on; and not less he had chiefly to bear the costs of the annual festival, although a portion of these was covered by voluntary gifts and endowments, or was apportioned among the several towns. Hence these presidentships were only accessible to rich people. The prosperity of the town Tralles is indicated by the fact that it never lacked Asiarchs—the title remained even after the expiration of the official year. The repute of the apostle Paul in Ephesus is indicated by his connection with different Asiarchs there. In spite of the expense this was an honorary position much sought after, not on account of the privileges attached to it, as of exemption from trusteeship, but on account of its outward splendor; the festal entrance into the town, in purple dress and with chaplet on the head, preceded by a procession of boys swinging their vessels of incense, was in the horizon of the Greeks of Asia Minor what the olive-branch of Olympia was among the Hellenes. *Theodor Mommsen,* in *The Provinces of the Roman Empire.*

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34. *When they perceived that he was a Jew.* It is probable that Alexander the Jew, who attempted to address the Ephesian mob, is to be identified with "Alexander the Coppersmith," the renegade Christian Jew who "did much evil" afterwards to Paul (1 Tim. 1.20; 2 Tim. 4.14). What Alexander desired in the theater was, perhaps, to clear himself and his fellow Jews from any complicity with Paul. When the populace saw that Alexander was a Jew, they refused to hear him. For a Jew, though tolerated by law, and even respected for his wealth and for his strange religious lore, yet was no general favorite; and now that the Ephesians were charged with the electricity of patriotic and religious fervor, the sight of a Jew daring to address them in their theater was just the stimulus to create an explosion. Ordinarily, the Jew lived quite peaceably among the Gentiles; and, indeed, to the tolerant polytheist, the reverence of the Jew for his far-off temple, the going to Jerusalem for festival and sacrifice, and other rules of Jewish devotion, must have presented analogies to Greek ritual which made the concordat the easier. *E. L. Hicks,* in *The Expositor.*

35. *The town-clerk.* At Ephesus there met together four authorities: the supreme authority of Rome, represented by the proconsul; the Dêmos or People, assembled in their Ecclesia or Assembly; the Asiarchate, or provincial authority; Artemis, or Diana, the patron goddess of the city.

The city of Ephesus was "free," and retained its Greek constitution, which was democratic in form. There was a Senate, to which power gravitated in imperial times. But nominally Ephesus was still governed by the People. An assembly was held three times a month, and these meetings were the *regular* or *ordinary assemblies* (verse 32). The substantial authority of the assembly was in the hands of its secretary, or town-clerk—the official who summoned and dismissed the assembly (verse 41), prepared the official decrees, kept the minutes and acted as chairman. Thus the town-clerk would naturally be one of the magnates of the city; and this we find to have been the case from the inscriptions, in which the secretary often appears as holding also the highest offices, such as the Asiarchate. Adapted from the *Commentary* on *Acts, by R. B. Rackham.*

35. *The city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana.* The usual meaning of νεωκόρος is a temple sweeper, or temple keeper; it afterwards became an honorary title, and is so used in this passage. It was conferred on persons and cities. Particular cities were appointed guardians of particular deities; and thus Ephesus received the honorable appelation of the guardian of the great Diana. This title is of frequent occurrence on the coins of Ephesus. Thus one of the coins of Nero has on it the figure of the temple Diana, with the word νεωκόρου; a coin which is of peculiar interest, as it was contemporary with the time of Paul's residence in Ephesus. *Paton J. Gloag.*

The town which possesses a temple dedicated to the Emperor by the diet of the province bears on that account the honorary predication of "the (imperial) temple-keeper"; and if a city has several, the number is appended. *Tacitus.*

38. *The courts are open.* For judicial purposes the Roman provinces were divided into shires (conventions), each with its assize town. In the province of Asia, Ephesus was the chief assize town; and accordingly court days were kept there, when justice was administered by the proconsul, who represented the supreme authority of Rome. *R. B. Rackham.*

39. *The regular assembly.* As M. Levy says, the Roman officials exercised the right themselves to summon a meeting of the Assembly whenever they pleased, and he also considers that distinct authorization by the Roman officials was required before an assembly could be legally summoned. Now, as we have already seen, the imperial government was very jealous of the right of popular assemblies. We may therefore conclude with confidence that the Roman officials were unlikely to give leave for any assembly beyond that certain regular number which was agreed upon and fixed beforehand. Thus the "regular" assemblies had come to be practically equivalent to the "lawful" assemblies; the extraordinary assemblies called by the officers of the city, which in the Greek period had been legal, were now disallowed and illegal, and extraordinary assemblies were now only summoned by Roman officials.

It was, therefore, necessary for Demetrius to wait until the next regular assembly, before he could have any opportunity of legally bringing any business before the People. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Expositor.*

40. *We are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot.* There is no interference with the public affairs of these towns—nay, not even with public disturbances consequent on the "right of public meetings," until a serious riot takes place. Then the town authorities are held responsible by the Romans, and perhaps punished and dismissed, or else the festival which led to the disturbancy may be suppressed for a time by the Roman governor. An interesting inscription from Ephesus contains an appeal to the proconsul L. Mestrius Florus (83-84 A. D.) to permit the celebration of the mysteries of Demeter Thesmophorus and Carpophorus and of the Augustan gods. It says that these festivals have been sanctioned by kings, emperors, and yearly proconsuls, as their letters testify. Even though fragmentary, this text is an important elucidation of the fears of the "town clerk" in the Acts, who tells the people that they run the risk of being held accountable for any uproar. *John P. Mahaffy,* in *The Silver Age of the Greek World.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

26. *There are no gods that are made with hands.* The Jews allow no images in their cities, much less in their temples. *Tacitus.*

25. *By this business we have our wealth.* The late Baroness Burdett-Coutts made an offer of a hundred thousand pounds, or half a million dollars, to be spent on digging artesian wells and repairing the aqueduct made by Solomon in order to supply Jerusalem with water. Russian and other princes offered to help in this great work, but the Turkish government refused to allow anyone outside of his people and religion to make improvements in this city, held as second only to Mecca by the Mohammedans. But the fact is that the protest against this work was made by the Moslem *Effendis* or noblemen of Jerusalem, who have a large cistern of water, and lease the well of Joab, at the foot of the valley of Jehoshaphat, from the government, which if stopped, would end a vast revenue which they receive from the sale of water to the poor in the long summer months. *Gamahliel Wad-El-Ward,* in *Palestine Through the Eyes of a Native.*

28. *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* They only knew from the shouts of the first rioters that the worship of Artemis was concerned; and for about two hours the vast assembly, like a crowd of devotees or howling dervishes, shouted their invocation of "Great Artemis." "Great Artemis" was a common formula of devotion and prayer, as is attested by several inscriptions. In this scene we can not mistake the tone of sarcasm and contempt, as Luke tells of this howling mob; they themselves thought they were performing their devotions, as they repeated the sacred name; but to Luke they were merely howling, not praying. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *Paul the Traveller.*

29. *The city was filled with confusion.* Throughout the early centuries the city mob, superstitious, uneducated, frivolous, swayed by the most commonplace motives, were everywhere the most dangerous and unfailing enemy of Christianity and often carried the imperial officials further than they wished in the way of persecution. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *Paul the Traveller.*

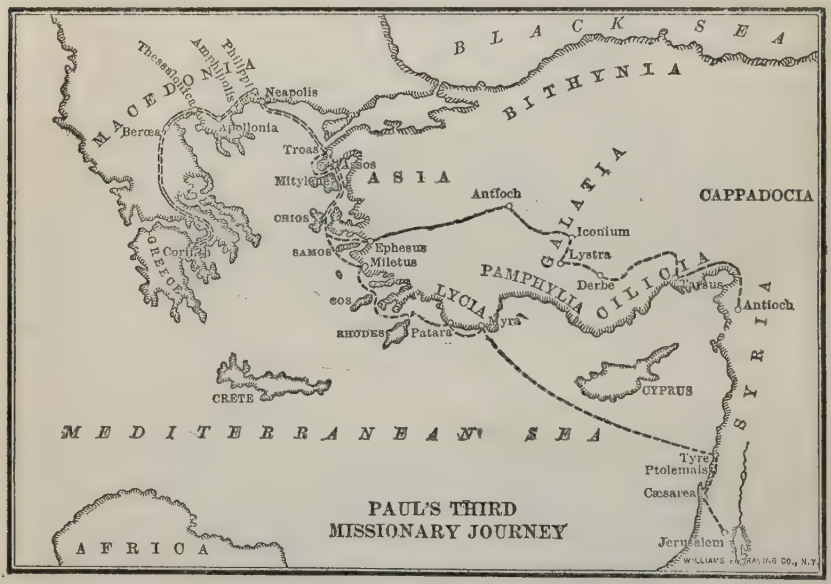
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Paul had intended remaining at Ephesus until Pentecost (1 Cor. 16.8), but the riot which is the theme of our lesson led to his departure a few months earlier. Luke tells us that Paul's purpose was to return to Macedonia and Achaia on his way to Jerusalem, and then to embark on a new enterprise to Rome. From Paul's letter to the Romans (15.24), we know that his plan included a visit to Spain, the chief center of Roman civilization in the west. Paul wished to strengthen the disciples in Macedonia and Achaia and also to finish the collection from the Gentile churches for the poor Christians at Jerusalem, which he would himself deliver. To prepare the way for this visit, he sent on to Macedonia his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, while he tarried yet awhile in Ephesus, for a great door and effectual was opened unto him, and there were many adversaries (1 Cor. 16.9).

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

In Greek cities the theater was the place not only for games, but for popular assemblies. It was usually an immense semi-circular building, without a roof. The capacity of the theater at Ephesus is variously estimated, from twenty-four to fifty-six thousand. It was located on the western slope of Mount Coresus, one of the two mountains on which the city of Ephesus was mainly built.

From an article by Professor Robert W. Rogers in the *Sunday-School Times* the following interesting account of Ephesus Lost and Found, is condensed: After the days of the great apostle, the city had many reverses. Its harbor silted up, and the works undertaken to preserve it only increased the rapidity of its destruction. Christianity swept over Asia Minor, and the temple lost its crowd of frequenters. The ever-flowing river Cayster flowed more slowly still, and overflowed the lower levels of the plain till the Christian inhabitants moved away to the higher slopes. In Byzantine times, the Emperor Justinian



built a great church named after St. John the Divine, whose lofty walls looked down disdainfully upon the ruins of the temple Artemis, "whom all the world worshippeth." The conquering Turks came, and re-named the city, where they settled, Ayasaluk, which is nothing but a corruption of Ayos Theologos, which came from Hagios Theologos, "holy theologian," that is, John the Divine. So were ancient Ephesus and its temple lost.

In May, 1863, an Englishman named John T. Wood began the work of excavation in Ephesus. He worked a year with no result. His funds gave out, and he applied to the British Museum for more. He received a hundred pounds, but was required to spend them in exploring the ruins of the Odeum, where he well knew no temple was to be found. In 1866 a grant from the British Museum was received with instructions to search the ruins of the great theater. For two whole years he worked on the theater, and at the end of the period found the remains of a great road, which he felt sure must have led to the temple. The trustees of the Museum gave two hundred pounds more, with a statement that they would give no more unless he produced that temple! Then came victory. He soon found the corner of the wall, which Augustus built in 6 B. C. to enclose the temple area, with the inscriptions recording the fact. On the last day of the year 1869 the marble pavement of the temple,

so long lost, so long sought for, was at last actually found at a depth of nearly twenty feet below the present surface of the ground.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A hundred years after the time of the events we are now studying, in the city of Smyrna, like Ephesus one of the great cities of the province of Asia, an immense and madly excited crowd was assembled in the stadium, or circus. Before them stood a venerable man, Polycarp, a Christian bishop. He had been kept in hiding for several days by his friends, for they knew his life was in danger, but had finally been discovered and brought before the maddened throng. The proconsul urged him to revile Christ, and his life should be spared. "Eighty and six years have I served Him," Polycarp calmly answered, "how can I revile my King and my Saviour?" Above the tumult of the throng the words were shouted, "This was the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the puller down of our gods, who teacheth numbers not to sacrifice nor worship," and the demand was made that he be thrown to the wild beasts. The games were over, and it was not lawful, the director of the games declared. Then the crowd demanded that he be burned alive, and they had their way; they quickly collected logs and fagots, and Polycarp perished in the flames.

When Paul was at Ephesus, a similar tumult raged in the theater there. It was declared that Paul "hath pursuaded and turned away much people, saying that there are no gods made with hands." The people were beside themselves with excitement and anger, and could they have had their way they would have put Paul to death. The Christian disciples kept Paul from entering the theater, and the rulers of the games, who were his friends, sent word to him not to risk his life by coming to the rescue of his friends who had been siezed. In our interest in these exciting events at Ephesus, we must not lose sight of their effect on Paul. He escaped with his life, indeed, but he was obliged to leave the city greatly dejected, "weighted down exceedingly," he wrote the Corinthians, because of "our affliction which befell us in Asia."

For Older Pupils. What the temple at Jerusalem was to the Jews, the temple of Diana at Ephesus was to the Greeks of Asia Minor. Crœsus and all the Greek cities of Asia contributed to the erection of the first temple, which was so magnificent that Xerxes spared it when he burned the other temples of Asia. On the day in which Alexander the Great was born in B. C. 356, Herostratos burned it because he wished to win "immortal renown." A second temple was at once commenced. It is said that Alexander the Great saw it while it was being built and offered to furnish all the money needed for its completion on condition that his name be inscribed as "dedicator." The priests were not in favor of Alexander, so they informed him that it is not fitting for a god to make a dedication to the gods! This is the temple, called one of the Seven Wonders of the World, that was standing in all its magnificence in Paul's day.

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Vested Interests

Ancient Vested Interests. Gibbon the historian says that the various forms of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were considered by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false, and by the magistrates as equally useful. We know so well how hostile the Jews were to the Christian doctrine, to what lengths the fanatical zeal of a Jew like Paul, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, led him in his early persecution of the Christians, that we are in danger of ascribing to the Greeks this same religious intolerance. Jewish fanaticism, in the words of Professor Ramsay, "excited the wonder of the tolerant, easy-going indifferentism of the ordinary pagans, who did not care two straws whether their neighbor worshipped twenty gods or twenty-one. In the Græco-Roman world every one was quite accustomed to the introduction of new deities from other countries. The priests of Diana looked on it with indifference. They had not found it injurious to their interests; rather, the growth of each new superstition added to the influence of Diana and her priests."

In city after city on Paul's travels we have seen the opposition that met him from the Jews—at Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium, at Lystra, at Thessalonica, at Berea, and at Corinth. At Philippi and at Ephesus the Gentiles were the aggressors. Why? It was the masters of the "maid having a spirit of divination" who stirred up the trouble in Philippi; it was when they saw that "the hope of their gain was gone" that they accused Paul and Silas before the magistrates of setting forth "customs not lawful for Romans," and thus concealing their self-interests under the cloak of patriotic zeal, aroused the multitudes to join them in their opposition. Similar in its real motive was the opposition at Ephesus. It was the trades which flourished there, the manufacture and sale of images and shrines, which were endangered by Paul's preaching against idolatry. If the people continued to turn away from the worship of Diana to the worship of God, there would soon be no sale for these images, and no profit from the multitudes who had always come to Ephesus to worship at the great temple of Diana. The worship of Diana is endangered by "this Paul," they cried, but that their trade was endangered was the real motive for stirring up the uproar.

Christianity was weighed in one side of the scales and the shrines of Diana in the other. A like estimate was made by Pliny in a letter to Trajan, written about 112 A. D., in which he approved of the latter's persecution of the Christians because it had resulted in a greater demand for fodder for the cattle raised for sacrifice.

"There is a project to have a Congress of Kings at Cambrai," reported Erasmus, "but certain persons who get nothing by peace and a great deal by war, throw obstacles in the way."

Modern Vested Interests. At Tien-tsin, where the Chinese officials had closed all the opium dens in the native city, Mr. Merwin found the dens of the foreign concessions, licensed for revenue by the foreign consuls, running wide open. In vain the Chinese officials protested that this laxity completely nullified the effect of their own prohibition. The consuls could not see their way clear to give up the revenue. *Success.*

The workingmen of San Francisco chose to regard the fight to defeat the corrupt Ruef-Schmitz administration at the polls as a struggle in which the economic questions involved were far more important than the moral questions. They argued the question in this way: "Under the present administration business has improved, wages have advanced, and we have all been prosperous. Skilled workmen who before the election of Mayor Schmitz were earning only from three to five dollars a day, are now getting from five to seven dollars. Why didn't the capitalist employers say something about graft when they were getting the plums? Ruef may be making money on the side, but he is taking it from people who can afford to pay; his hand isn't in our pocket. *George Kennan,* in *McClure's Magazine.*

One of the great difficulties which beset the newspaper editor when he tries to discuss public questions is the fact that most of his readers have a strong pecuniary or personal interest in having them decided in some particular way. The man who employs labor feels the need of giving the largest amount of control to him who risks his capital. The arguments in favor of the rights of the capitalist employers seem to him strong; all efforts to limit those rights savor of immorality. The laborer, on the contrary, who works for another man, feels that he, in giving his effort and perhaps risking his life, has far more to do with the product than the man who has simply invested his money. He looks with favor on every argument concerning the rights of labor, and with disfavor at any argument or precedent which seems to support the claims of capital. If an editor wishes to make his paper popular with a certain class, he lays stress on the arguments which that class likes and feeds them with the facts which they want to believe. *Arthur R. Hadley,* in *Standards of Public Morality.*

II Mobs

The Whole City was filled with Confusion. What a vivid picture Luke gives us of that wild scene at Ephesus—Demetrius raising in the others interested in the same trade great excitement over the danger threatening their business,

curious "hangers-on" joining with them in their shout of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" till the crowd becomes too great for the street and "with one accord" they swarm into the theater, siezing on their way two of Paul's companions and dragging them with them, the greater part of the mob not knowing why nor wherefore they are met in that forum, and then for two long hours all shouting and howling till exhausted! Alexander may have had something to say worth listening to, but there is no reason in a mob, it neither listens nor thinks. If it did, it would not be a mob.

A Wild Mob of Children. At school you are taught how to leave the building quickly should a fire break out. You do not make a mad rush for a door, each one thinking only of himself, or, too frightened to think at all, doing what the rest are doing, but you march out in order and the files of self-possessed individuals quickly pass through doors and down staircases which would be jammed by an excited mob, trampling upon and crushing one another.

Recently a panic occurred in a public hall in England which resulted in the death of sixteen children and the terrible injury of forty more. An entertainment was to be given, and the aisles of the gallery were packed with children. It was decided to transfer some of them to the lower part of the house, and a mad rush for the seats below ensued; the children became a mob; even those who had seats became panic stricken by the screams and struggles of the crowds fighting to reach the staircase, and joined in the stampede. How needless all that terrible suffering and loss of life!

A Mob is a Wild Beast. A mob has no brains to think, no breast to feel, and no reason to judge between right and wrong. When democracy becomes mobocracy, the days of the republic will be numbered. Mob law is one of the greatest dangers in a republican form of government. It is anarchy, pure and simple. It is vastly more dangerous to a republic than to a monarchy. It resolves society into savagery. It brutalizes and demoralizes all who participate in it. It puts brute force in the place of law, and vengeance in the place of justice. It is treason to the republic and a dishonor to humanity. Ours is the only country on the globe that roasts at the stake men uncondemned and untried. Nowhere else are lynchings known or possible. *Robert S. MacArthur,* in *The Homiletic Review.*

III Missionary Topic Idolatry

Idolatry in China. In Birmingham, England, there is a manufactory of Chinese idols, where can be purchased gods of all sizes and prices, some of them smiling, some of them fierce, and some of them hideous. "There are no gods that are made with hands," Paul taught the Ephesians. Very interesting is the way in which the prophet Isaiah portrayed the folly of idolatry. A man takes a tree, he says, and with a part of it kindles a fire and bakes bread, while of another part of it he makes a god, a graven image, and falls down before it and worships it, and prays unto it saying, Deliver me; for thou art my god!

Heathen philosophy in Paul's day taught that images only represented gods, but the ignorant worshipped them as gods just as they do still in heathen lands. As soon as a little child in China can walk he is taught to clasp his hands before an idol in the temple, and bowing down to knock his head on the ground before it in reverence. At first he is naturally afraid of the ugly image in the dim light of the light of the temple, but his mother perseveres in making him worship it, and then rewards him with a little present.

The brighter outlook in China is foreshadowed by Bishop J. W. Bashford in an account that he gives of a recent meeting which he held in a temple there. Surrounded by heathen idols, he preached to a thousand people who had never heard the "Gospel" or "Good News." At the close of his talk he said to them: "I am not sure that I can find any one to come and teach you this religion. But if I find a teacher, we could not teach here in your temple, and you would need to find a hall or building where we could teach." They thought they could rent a building. Then he said, "The first commandment in our Bible forbids idol worship; there are no other gods and you must give up idol worship if you wish to become Christians." He then appealed to them

to know how many, from such knowledge as they now had of their idols and of this religion, desired to become Christians and would come to a new teacher for instruction. "I suppose two hundred and fifty of them promptly raised their hands, "says the Bishop. "At the close of the service forty or fifty of them gathered around to assure me that they could find a house for the teacher and a hall in which he could teach them, and that they would help support him if I would send him. Surely the set time of favor in China has come. You will think that the Chinese are simply children, ready to hear and adopt any new doctrine. Upon the contrary, they are the most firm and conservative people on the face of the earth. Had our early missionaries seen any such manifestations of readiness to accept the Gospel, they would have thought the golden age of Christ to be at hand."

African Gods. The gods of Africa are divided into four main classes—general gods, worshipped by various tribes over larger sections of the country; tribal gods, which have no recognition beyond the limits of their respective tribes; family gods, each for its particular family; and individual gods, each the sole property of a particular person.

Any pagan, fearful lest the family, tribal, and general deities be too preoccupied to give adequate attention to his personal affairs, may secure a rude image secretly from a priest, or may himself carve one. Gruesome and noisome rites dedicate this as the abode of some god. The underlying idea of images is that spirits must have something tangible to work through, just as the spirit of man has the body. These individual gods have nothing to do but to advance the interests of their respective worshippers. Since the pagan has so many interests that are hostile to the property and life of his neighbors, and since the gods chosen for individual worship are ordinarily dedicated to revenge and violence, the possessor of an individual god is much feared. In some quarters priests and witch-doctors are forbidden to make them. *Wilson S. Naylor,* in *Daybreak in the Dark Continent.*

Gods in India. In Benares there are more than five hundred thousand idols established in permanent places for worship, representing every variety of god in the Hindu pantheon, so that all the pilgrims who go there may find consolation and some object of worship. There are twenty-eight sacred cows at the central temples, and perhaps five hundred more at other places of worship throughout the city; the trees around the temple gardens swarm with sacred monkeys and apes. *William Eleroy Curtis,* in *Modern India.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The most sensitive part of "civilized" man is his pocket. *W. M. Ramsay.*

There is nothing more common than for men to hang one motive outside where it can be seen, and keep the others in the background to turn the machine. *H. W. Beecher.*

Ephesus had one Diana; London has a dozen and New York a score. *J. M. Thoburn.*

I am conscious that though there is much impurity in my motives, they are in the main for the glory of Him to whom I have devoted myself. *Livingstone.*

Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. Acts 17.29.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Almost all actions have complex motives back of them. Demetrius may have possessed religious zeal, and in that case a secondary motive of self interest would not have made wrong the stand he took. To pretend to be actuated by religious zeal when the only real motive is self-interest, is hypocritical and detestable.

In small things as well as great, one should judge questions of principle on their own merits, irrespective of the "personal equation," the effect that the decision will have on one's own interests.

It is not only in Ephesus that people have shouted "Great is Diana" merely

RUINS OF THE THEATRE AT EPHESUS

The Theatre in which the riot occurred at the close of Paul's sojourn at Ephesus. The stone seats, still well preserved, accommodate 30,000 spectators. The stage, and also the arena extending from the stage to the lower tier of seats, has been uncovered.

because others were shouting this, not themselves knowing the reason for the outcry.

Nor is it only in Ephesus that a proposed argument has been met in the way that Alexander's was.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Paul's preaching of Christianity at Ephesus interfered with the profits of the makers and sellers of shrines of Diana. A silversmith named Demetrius called a meeting of those engaged in his own and kindred trades, and easily aroused them to the danger that threatened their business. Multitudes not only at Ephesus but throughout Asia were accepting Paul's teaching that images made by hands were not gods, and soon there would be no sale for their shrines. A pretext other than self-interest must be had for action, however, and this Demetrius found in the danger that threatened their religion—the great goddess Diana, whom all the world worshipped, would become of no account. His hearers were filled with wrath, and shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Others joined them, and soon there was a riot. The mob seized Gaius and Aristarchus, of Macedonia, companions of Paul, and rushed with them into the theater. Paul heard of it and wished to enter the theater to defend his friends or share their fate, but the other Christians would not permit this, and the Asiarchs, the officers in charge of the games, who were friendly to Paul, sent him word not to risk his life by going into the theater. Why they were there, what all the trouble was about, the greater part of the mob in the theater did not know; some cried one thing and some another, and confusion reigned supreme. When a Jew named Alexander sought to address them (probably a hostile Jew who wished to disclaim any connection of himself and friends with Paul) they refused to hear him. For two hours they shouted themselves hoarse with their repeated cries of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." At last the town clerk quieted them, and rescued Gaius and Alexander. Who does not know, he told them, that Ephesus is the temple-keeper of the heaven-fallen image of Diana; since this was unquestionable, they should not act rashly as they were doing, bringing men hither who could not be charged with robbing temples nor blaspheming their goddess. If Demetrius and the craftsmen had aught against them, let them take the matter where it belonged, before the proconsuls on court days. If they as citizens demanded anything further, let them settle it at a regular assembly. This riot was inexcusable, and they might be called to account for it by the Roman government. His clever speech had the desired effect, and the people dispersed when he formally dismissed them. The uproar about the matter ceased, but Paul could no longer continue his work effectively, and left Ephesus for Macedonia.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Trades Unions. "Trades and handicrafts were fully organized in the Greek cities of Asia, and Demetrius was, no doubt, warden of the "guild of the silver shrine makers." See "The Ethics of Trade and Corporate Management" in "The Kennedy Lectures," by President Hadley of Yale.

2. Abuses which exist because of private interests involved.

3. Modern idols. See "The True Man and the Church's Idols," by Laird Wingate Snell, in the *Outlook* for Sept. 21, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read carefully chapters 12, 13 and 14 of First Corinthians. 2. Commit to memory the thirteenth chapter. 3. What is meant by "the tongues of men and of angels"? 4. Review the lesson about the gift of tongues at Pentecost. 5. What is meant by "faith so as to remove mountains"? 6. Can there be charity without love? 6. What adjective can you use for each clause in verses 4 and 5? 8. What counsels of Paul to the Thessalonians studied three weeks ago are recalled by verses 4-7? 9. Read the First Epistle of John, whose main theme is love. 10. Write down the most beautiful thoughts about love that it contains. 11. What is the greatest example of love? (John 15.13.) 12. What did Jesus say are the two great commandments? (Mark 12.28-33.) 13. What did Jesus say expressed God's love for the world? (John 3.16.)

LESSON IX—AUGUST 29

PAUL ON CHRISTIAN LOVE

Read 1 Corinthians 13.1-13. Commit verse 8.

Golden Text

But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor. 13.13.

LESSON TEXT 1 Cor. 13.1-13

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor,* and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Love suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; 6 rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; 7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Love never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall be done away; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall be done away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 10 but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. 13 But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Tongues of men.* A reference to the gift of tongues at Pentecost and after. See 12.8-11, 28-31; 14.2-24.—*Of angels.* "Marking a summit of possibility in this gift" (*Beet*).—*Love.* Our word *charity* in the A. V. is derived from a Latin word meaning costly, dear, loved, but it is now used only to express liberality toward the poor or liberalness in judging others, and our word *love* better expresses the Greek word ἀγάπη.—*Sounding brass.* A trumpet or instrument made of brass.

2. *Gift of prophecy.* A rival of the "gift of tongues." See 14.3.—*All mysteries and all knowledge.* Knowledge here means knowledge of revelation. All divine truth. See Rom. 11.33.—*All faith.* "Trust that carries with it miraculous power" (*Maclaren*).—*So as to remove mountains.* Evidently a proverbial expression. See Matt. 17.20; 21.21.—*I am nothing.* "This suggests, and the cases of Balaam and Samson prove, that a man may have superhuman gifts and yet be destitute of spiritual life" (*Beet*).

3. *Feed the poor.* This is an act of *charity,* as we now use that word. The Jews were very ostentatious in their alms-giving; see Matt. 6.2.—*It profiteth me nothing.* See Matt. 6.1.

4. *Love suffereth long.* Prov. 10.12; 17.9.—*Vaunteth.* Boasteth.—*Puffed up.* Inflated, as we say, with a sense of one's superiority.

5. *Unseemly.* Rudely, discourteously.—*Seeketh not its own.* See 10.24.

6. *Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness.* There are self-righteous people who

take pleasure in considering the faults of others.—*With the truth.* "Truth is here personified, rejoices when it realizes itself in human conduct" (*Beet*).

7. *Beareth all things; endureth all things.* Bears with the ingratitude of the one loved; endures hardship for the sake of the one loved.—*Believeth all things, hopeth all things.* Believes in the person loved, and when such faith is no longer possible, hopes.

8. A return to the comparison of love with the special gifts mentioned in verses 1 and 2.

9. *We know in part.* A universal truth, but referring here to the special gifts of knowledge and prophecy, verse 2. "The passage is important as showing a consciousness of the imperfection even of revealed knowledge" (*Stanley*).

10. *Perfect.* The same Greek word is translated *full-grown* in 2.6. "Verse 10 states a universal principle, but refers especially to verse 9. It proves *will come to naught* (shall be done away) in verse 8. Knowledge and prophecy are but torches giving amid general darkness a partial light. Therefore, when dawns the Eternal Day, they will become useless" (*Beet*).

11. An illustration of verses 8-10.

12. *Then shall I know fully.* "We shall stand before God, and look upon His face (Matt. 5.8; Heb. 12.14), and, seeing Him, we shall see all things" (*Beet*).—*I was fully known.* By God. 1 Cor. 8.3.

13. *The greatest of these is love.* "God is not faith, God is not hope, but God is love (*Bengel*).

SUGGESTIVE WORDS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

1. *Sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.* People of little religion are always noisy. He who has not the love of God and man filling his heart is like an empty wagon coming violently down a hill; it makes a great noise, because there is nothing in it. *A collier of Somerset,* quoted by *Dr. Clarke.*

2. *The gift of prophecy.* In all the cases of "prophesying" in the New Testament as in the Old, the prominent idea is, not that of prediction, but of delivering inspired messages of warning, exhortation, and instruction: "building up, exhorting, and comforting" (1 Cor. 14.3), "convincing, judging and making manifest the secrets of the heart" (1 Cor. 14.24, 25). Elijah and Paul are called "prophets", not because they foretold the future, but because they enlightened the present. *Dean Stanley.*

4. *Love vaunteth not itself.*

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.
Tennyson.

7. *Beareth all things.*

Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixèd mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken. *Shakespeare.*

8. *Love never faileth.*

O merchant at heaven's mart for heavenly ware!
Love is the only coin that passes there. *Archbishop Trench.*

8-13. The argument of these verses involves the important truth that the continuity of human character is not broken either by death or judgment, any more than it is now broken by change of circumstances. For we are told explicitly that when human knowledge fades in the light of eternity, even then love will abide. Now *knowledge* refers, not to the abstract principle, which will never pass away, but to the superiority of knowledge possessed now by an individual. And, to give force to Paul's argument, *love* must refer to the degree of Christian love attained here by each individual. Only thus can the permanence of love be a motive for the pursuit of it. Moreover, what is true of knowledge and prophecy is true of all other capacities for usefulness, wealth, rank, learning, eloquence, mental power. We learn, therefore, that although before the gates of death we shall lay down for ever the various weapons with

which God has armed us to fight for Him, we shall carry through those gates the moral character which the conflict of life has developed within us. And this gives to moral excellence an infinite superiority over the most brilliant powers for usefulness. *J. Agar Beet,* in *St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians.*

12. *Now we see in a mirror, darkly.* And meantime, while we live in the world of reflected light, what is our duty? It is to keep the mirror fit to transmit the light. What is it to have faith in God? It is to be sure that the light, though it comes from behind, is trustworthy and real. What is the great mistake of life? It is to cover over the mirror because it is not the sun, and to be content to sit in the dark. What is it to live? It is to let the light shine over our shoulder and find it the best to work by. And what is it to die? It is simply to turn from the mirror on the wall and pass out from one's shadowy workroom into the uninterrupted and immediate sunlight of God. *F. G. Peabody,* in *Afternoons in the College Chapel.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Tongues of angels.* It is probable that Paul speaks here after the manner of his countrymen, who imagined that there was an angelic language which was the key to many mysteries. *Adam Clarke.*

1. *Brass.* Bronze, a word denoting always in the Bible copper, either pure or containing as usual a small proportion of other metal, generally tin. Copper was wrought in very early times, probably earlier than iron; and for hardness and fusibility was alloyed with tin. Brass, *i. e.,* an alloy of copper and zinc, has not, I believe, been found among any metallic relics of the past. *J. Agar Beet.*

Ancient Metal Mirror.

1. *Cymbal.* Two circular concave metallic plates struck together produced a clanging "music."

2. *If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains.* Removing mountains, and rooting up of mountains, are phrases very generally used to signify the removing or conquering great difficulties. Many of the rabbis were termed "rooters up of mountains" because they were dexterous in removing difficulties, solving cases of conscience, etc. In this sense our Lord's words in Matt. 21.21 are to be understood. He that hath faith will get through any difficulty and perplexity; mountains shall become molehills or plains before him. The saying is a proverbial form of speech which no Jew could misunderstand. *Adam Clarke.*

3. *If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.* Eastern religions have tended to make the act of almsgiving stand for the virtue of which it is but one form. Of the five articles of the Musselman creed, almsgiving is the only moral truth. In the Jewish religion, at the time of the Christian era, the word corresponding to "duty" or "righteousness" had been confined, in like manner, to outward acts of beneficence. *Dean Stanley.*

3. *If I give my body to be burned.* It has been suggested by Dr. Lightfoot that Paul may have seen at Athens this inscription on a tomb in memory of a fanatic from India who, in the time of Augustus, leaped on a funeral pyre: "Zarmanochegas, the Indian from Bargosé, according to the ancient customs of India, made himself immortal and lies here."

12. *We see in a mirror darkly.* Mirrors at this time were circular pieces of polished metal provided with a handle, and were poor reflectors.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Toward the close of Paul's stay at Ephesus he received discouraging news in regard to the Church he had founded at Corinth. Factions had arisen, jealousy was rampant. (See the Epistle to the First Corinthians, page 22 of this Guide.) He received a letter from Corinth asking him to decide certain vexing questions, and this first Epistle to the Corinthians is his answer. The question concerning "spiritual gifts" he answers in chapters 12-14. In chapter 12 he argues

that there are diverse gifts, but the Spirit is the same; in chapter 14 that the gift of prophecy is better than that of tongues; in the midst of this background of controversy and discussion he suddenly stops and counsels his readers to desire earnestly the greater gifts: he will show them a most excellent way (12. 31), and that way is the way of love, chapter 13. "It is as if, in a mighty battle there should suddenly be a cessation of arms," says Henry Ward Beecher, "and there should be lifted up, and roll over the battle-field, a wondrous hymn, united in by all the bands; and as if no sooner were the notes of this magnificent music completed than the battle should begin again, and the bands, separately, should go their several ways, to cheer their several squadrons."

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Once upon a time, says a writer in the *Christian Advocate,* there was a man who had a very wonderful mantle, by which he was able to do many things. Whenever he put it on and went abroad he always appeared to all to be noble and high-minded and generous, a great, good man. Besides this, he could actually work miracles with his robe, and so change a person that you would scarcely know him. With it he could make a rough and surly and disagreeable man gentle and peaceable and friendly disposed toward him—a friend out of an enemy.

Who was this owner and what of his robe? His name was none other than Paul, and his robe was the beautiful garment of love. He always wore it when he went about doing good, trying to follow in the footsteps of the Master. He said and wrote much to lead others to wear it. In the thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians he describes this wonderful garment of love.

For Older Pupils. We naturally think of John as the apostle of love and of Paul as the apostle of faith. Perhaps we have been so busy studying Paul as the apostle of missions that we have failed to note sufficiently that it was love which actuated his missionary zeal, that his letters are studded with tender words of affection, and that he was a man who both loved and was loved mightily. "Concerning love of the brethren," he wrote to the Thessalonians, "ye have no need that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another"; and on almost every page of his writings there is some word or token of love. Professor Henry Drummond wrote about "Love, the Greatest Thing in the World," and no one has ever equaled him in writing on this theme. His friends said that he was able to write this noble treatise on love because he illustrated it in his own life. "Some men take an occasional journey into the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, but Henry Drummond was a man who lived there constantly," says his biographer. So Paul was able to write his inspired "Hymn of Heavenly Love," because he lived constantly in its spirit.

"On each side of this chapter the tumult of argument and remonstrance still rages," says Dean Stanley; "but within it, all is calm: the sentences move in almost rhythmical melody; the imagery unfolds itself in almost dramatic propriety; the language arranges itself with almost rhetorical accuracy. We can imagine how the apostle's amanuensis must have paused, to look up in his master's face at the sudden change in the style of his dictation, and must have seen his countenance lighted up as it had been the face of an angel, as this vision of divine perfection passed before him."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Greatest Thing in the World

The Supreme Good; its Expression; its Attainment. Every one has asked himself the great question of antiquity as of the modern world: What is the *summum bonum*—the supreme good? You have life before you. Once only you can live it. What is the noblest object of desire, the supreme gift to covet? Without a moment's hesitation Paul's decision falls, "the greatest of these is Love." Peter says, "Above all things have fervent love among yourselves." Above *all* things. And John goes farther, for he says that "God is love."

Paul contrasts love with faith and with charity. Why is love greater than faith? Because the end is greater than the means. And what is the use of having faith? It is to connect the soul with God. And what is the object of connecting man with God? That he may become like God. But God is Love. Hence Faith, the means, is in order to Love, the end. Why is love greater than charity? Because the whole is greater than the part. Charity is only a little bit of love, one of the innumerable avenues of love, and there may be, and there is, a great deal of charity without love.

In these verses Paul gives us an amazing analysis of this supreme thing. As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors—red, and blue, and yellow, and violet, and orange, and all the colors of the rainbow—so Paul passes this thing, Love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the spectrum of Love, the analysis of Love. Notice that they have common names; that they are virtues which we hear about every day; that they are things which can be practiced by every man in any place in life. Patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, sincerity—these make up the supreme gift, the stature of the perfect man.

We hear much of love to God; Christ spoke much of love to man. Religion is not a strange or added thing, but the inspiration of the secular life. Is life not full of opportunities for learning love? Life is not a holiday, but an education. And the one eternal lesson for us all is *how better we can love.* What makes a man a good linguist, a good stenographer? Practice. What makes a man a good man? Practice. Love is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is a rich, strong, manly, vigorous expression of the whole round Christian character—the Christlike nature in its fullest development, and the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practice. Condensed from *The Greatest Thing in the World,* by *Henry Drummond.*

Lend-a-Hand. Saint Paul put the rule for the life of an immortal being when he said that there were three eternal realities in that life. He called one faith, by which he meant intimacy with God; he called one hope, by which he meant living in the future, over-stepping the rather petty necessities or experiences of to-day; and third, and greatest of all, according to him, he placed love, by which he meant that a man must live outside himself, for and with everybody else who comes in his way. Love is the greatest of the three Eternities.

In the Lend-a-Hand clubs we try to express Paul's direction in the language of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by saying, "Look up and not down," this means faith; "Look forward and not back," this means hope; "Look out and not in," this means love. And because love is the greatest of the three, and because one wants to avoid "talky-talky" life and to advance into genuine life, love has two mottoes, of which the second is "Lend a hand." *Edward Everett Hale,* in *The Youth's Companion.*

II Some Attributes of Love

Love suffereth long and is kind. "Suffereth long" and "endureth" are different translations of the same Greek word that means "long-minded." Long thought always shows a man the folly of unkindness. Hatred, cruelty, malice, are short-minded. They are impetuous and hasty. The man who looks simply to the immediate present will yield to them. But the man who looks into the distance will see that hatred blinds his discrimination, warps his judgment, embitters his heart, and unsteadies his action.

In galling hours it takes more than ordinary thought to continue to be kind. Only he who then thinks far is able to be forgiving, generous, magnanimous. Hatred helps neither the man on whom it is outpoured, nor the man who outpours it; while love surely enriches the heart of the man who cherishes it and may bless the life of him who receives it. Love can afford to be kind, because it ponders results. It is always a short-sighted policy to be malicious. Homes

where one hundred is counted before the angered person speaks are in the line of long-mindedness. Long-mindedness is far-away anticipation; it is seeing matters as they will appear next season; it is considering how petty the feeling of hatred may seem years hence—or when the perplexity is past—or when the crisis is weathered. *James G. K. McClure,* in *Loyalty.*

Love seeketh not its Own. A child quarreled with his brother one day about a cooky. "It is my cooky!" said the child.

"No, it's mine!" said his brother.

"You shall not not have it!" said the child. "Give it to me this minute!" and he fell upon his brother and beat him.

Just then came by an Angel who knew the child. "Who is this that you are beating?" asked the Angel.

"It is my brother!" said the child.

"No, but truly!" said the angel, "who is it?"

"It is my brother, I tell you!" said the child.

"O no!" said the angel. "That cannot be, and it seems a pity for you to tell an untruth, because that makes spots on your soul. If it was your brother, you would not beat him!"

"But he has my cooky!" said the child.

"Oh!" said the angel, "Now I see my mistake. You mean that the cooky is your brother; and that seems a pity, too, for it does not look like a very good cooky, and besides, it is all crumbled to pieces." *A Fable,* by *Laura E. Richards.*

Love beareth All Things, endureth All Things. The hymn rings the changes on one note. Should we not have looked to hear, not what love can bear, but what love can do? Nay, my soul, Paul is right, and thou art wrong. Art thou seeking a romantic outlet for thy love? Art thou looking for a chance to plunge into the river, or to face the devouring flame? Art thou saying, either to thy Christ or to thy brother, "Bid me that I come to thee on the waters?" I would dissuade thee from such a prayer. It is not the *height* of the aim that makes me dissuade thee. I do not think the aim high enough, the test sure enough. Can thy love bear life's little frictions? Can it bear the frettings by the world's prose? Can it bear to be itself misunderstood, misinterpreted? Can it endure a delay in the response; can it support those moments of silence where there is no return? If thy love can bear that and not die, it is worthy of Paul's hymn. *George Matheson,* in *Times of Retirement.*

III Charity without Love

It profiteth Nothing. If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. There is such a thing as charity without love. There is a charity which seeks only the praise of men, and there is a charity whose motive is personal relief from the sight of misery. The rich man who of his superfluity cast much into the treasury as Jesus sat and watched is an example of the one, you yourself when you toss a nickle or a dime to a blind beggar on a street corner are an example of the other. There is no love in either transaction. "A copper farthing," says the Irish proverb, "given with a kind hand is fairy gold, and blesses as it goes," but a gold coin given grudgingly brings no blessing to the giver.

Our word *philanthropist* is derived from two Greek words φίλος, *loving* and ἄνθρωπος, *man,* and means one who loves mankind. "Thy heart must have been full of love for that poor girl," said the poet Whittier to the superintendent of the Massachusetts Women's Reformatory when he learned what she had done for one of her charges. She was a true philanthropist. The city missionary, the college girl in the "Settlement," the workers in all the varied branches of philanthropic work, must be actuated by love for those for whom they labor or their work will meet with but poor success, and it shall profit them nothing.

Two Pennies.

The Selfish Penny sank heavily,
Like a lump of lead, as it well might be;
No love went with it. "I might have bought
So much for myself!" was the only thought—
The mean little selfish giver!

The Loving Penny dropped softly down,
Like red, red gold from a royal crown;
Pity and love made his eyes grow dim
As he gave his all, and the Lord loved *him*—
The dear little cheerful giver! *Anna Burnham Bryant.*

Two Givers. "One may deal with things without love," Tolstoi tells us; "one may cut down trees, make bricks, hammer iron, without love, but one cannot deal with men without love." Friends of one of New York's richest women, one who gave great sums in secret charities, were speaking of her thoughtfulness for others. "She often sends out her carriage with friends who are ill or people who cannot afford the luxury of a drive," remarked one. "O no," corrected another, "she does not send out her carriage, she goes with it. The drive is not given as an alms but as a pleasure which she enjoys sharing with others."

Another wealthy New York woman had a life-long friend who suddenly lost all her money and became destitute. The rich woman went to an institution for the homeless seeking admission for her friend. She was willing to pay the amount required, and was well satisfied with her "charity." "Why do you not receive her into your own home?" the matron questioned. "O that could not be done, I have only a few guest rooms and we entertain a great deal," she explained. "But I know a family that have no guest room and they have taken in a friend and her children," said the matron, and the rich woman returned, "O, but you know, that is different, such people can do those things."

SENTENCE SERMONS

The higher charity must not become hired charity. *Rabbi Stephen S. Wise.*

Devotion rounds the man and makes him whole;
Love is the measure of the human soul. *James Buckham.*

Why, love does all that's noble here below. *John Dryden.*

The duty of love persists whether he to whom it is paid is grateful or not. *Holtzmann.*

It is in the quality of the action in relation to those whom we help that the lovingness of our love reveals itself. *W. Boyd Carpenter.*

We are shaped and fashioned by what we love. *Goethe.*

We do not have to know the whole mystery of God before we can obey Him. *F. G. Peabody.*

Happiness is a great love and much serving. *George Adam Smith.*

The worlds in which we live at heart are one,
The world "I am," the fruit of "I have done";
And underneath these worlds of flower and fruit,
The world "I love"—the only living root. *Henry van Dyke.*

I tell you, fellow Christians, your love has a broken wing, if it can not fly across the ocean, which being interpreted means, your life is not right with God for your own salvation, if you have no desire to give others the gift of the gospel. *M. D. Babcock.*

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4.8, 10, 11.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Having committed Paul's Psalm of Love to memory, have you also committed it to life? Can you live in its spirit? Are you more and more forbearing, kind, generous, humble, courteous, unselfish, good-tempered, guileless, sincere, capable of bearing, believing, hoping, and enduring all things for others? If you would have love control your life you must put Him who is Love in control of your life.

Do you give gladly or grudgingly, meanly or generously, loving or lovelessly?

If you have an abiding consciousness of the great background of eternity, you will think less of the things that perish—riches, honor, pleasure—and more of the things that abide—faith, hope and love.

Let us make this prayer of Christina Rossetti's ours: Lord, give us, I beseech Thee, grace to love Thee whom now we see not, and for Thy sake to love all whom we see; and grant us one day to inherit the blessing of those who, not having seen, yet have believed and loved.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The members of the Corinthian Church were endowed by God with varied gifts, some having the gift of healing, others of speaking, others of interpreting, wrote the Apostle Paul, but they ought to desire earnestly the greater gifts (12.28-39). What are the greater gifts? Prophesying is better than speaking with tongues, Paul explains in chapter 14, but in chapter 13 he turns aside from the consideration of this question and shows the best way of pursuing any gift, and gives a standard by which all things are to be measured. That standard is love, without it the most highly prized gifts possessed in the highest possible degree are worthless. Without love the gift of tongues, even that of angels, becomes as meaningless noise, the gift of inspired speech, the knowledge of revelation, the faith that could overcome all obstacles, becomes valueless, the giving of great possessions to the poor and the making of extraordinary sacrifices have no profit for the giver and maker.

Love manifests itself in its forbearance and kindness; love never envies others; love is not boastful nor proud, does not act with discourtesy, is not self-centered, is not provoked, does not look for evil in others and finds no pleasure in others' wrong-doing, but shares in the joy of Truth; it bears and believes and hopes and endures all things for others.

Love to God and man is permanent; prophecies, tongues, and revealed knowledge are transitory. Some of us now know and prophesy a few things, but when dawns the great Day such knowledge and prophecy will fade away in the great light of perfect understanding, just as the words and feelings and thoughts of childhood pass away when manhood is reached. Now we see as in the reflection of a dim mirror; then we shall see face to face and shall know fully even as we are fully known to God. Faith, hope, and love are the three things that abide forever; and the greatest of the three, the object of the other two, is love.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. See "The Greatest Thing in the World," by Professor Henry Drummond. This book every member of the class should own and study.
2. Motives versus actions, verses 1 and 2.
3. Endowment ("gifts") versus character (the fruit of love).

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What addresses of Paul's have we studied? (Lessons VI and VII of second quarter, and lesson IV of third quarter.) 2. Commit to memory his address to the elder's at Ephesus. 3. Make an analysis of its contents. 4. What Old Testament prophet about whom we studied last year called the people to bear witness in regard to his life among them? (1 Sam. 12.1-5.) 5. What does Paul call himself in the introduction to his letters to the Romans, Philippians, and to Titus? 6. What persecutions endured by Paul have been recorded in our earlier lessons? 7. Read what Paul wrote to Timothy (2 Tim. 4.6-8) in regard to his life's course. 8. Read what Paul says about the danger of covetousness in 1 Tim. 6.6-11. 9. When did Jesus bid His disciples "take heed" and "watch"? (Luke 21.34, 36.) 10. Read Jesus' words in regard to the duties of the shepherd of the flock in John 10.1-18 and 21.15-17, and Peter's words in 1 Pet. 5.1-4.

LESSON X—SEPTEMBER 5

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY—FAREWELLS

Read Acts 20.2-38. Commit verses 31, 32.

Golden Text

I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me. Phil. 4.13.

LESSON TEXT Acts 20.17-35

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, 19 serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews; 20 how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. 28 Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build *you* up, and to give *you* the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. 33 I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

17. *The elders.* Bishops, verse 28. See Titus 1.5, 7. R. V. M., *presbyters.*

18. *From the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time. A space of three years,* verse 31. The first day that Paul set foot in Asia is recorded in Acts 16.6, but his first preaching there is recorded in 18.19. His actual ministry lasted more than two years, and is, therefore, in Jewish usage termed "a space of three years." *The manner* of his life with them is given in the next three verses.

19. *Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind.* Rom. 1.1.—*And with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews.* See 1 Cor. 15.32; 2 Cor. 1.8-10.

20. *How.* This depends on *Ye know,* verse 18. See verse 27. Fear of giving offence to the Jews and endangering his life did not keep him from preaching a crucified Christ, and the gospel for Gentiles as well as Jews.

22. *I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem.* "In the bonds of the Lord's service" (*Rackham*).

23. *The Holy Spirit testifieth unto me.* Compare 8.29; 13.2; 21.4-11.

24. *But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course.* R. V. M., *in comparison of accomplishing my course. Accomplish my course* is a metaphor suggested by the Greek games, especially the foot-race. See Acts 13.25; Phil. 2.16; 2 Tim. 4.7.—*The ministry.* Object of the verb *finish.*—*Which I received from the Lord Jesus.* See Col. 1.23, 25; 1 Tim. 1.12.—*To testify the gospel of the grace of God.* To make known the good news of God's free gift of salvation is the purpose of Paul's ministry.

25. *The Kingdom.* See Matt. 24.14.—*Ye all shall see my face no more.* Some scholars believe that Paul was released from the Roman imprisonment told of in Acts, and that the Epistles to Timothy refer to a later visit to Ephesus. Rackham suggests that "Paul is thinking, not so much of a literal glimpse with the eye, as of the constant beholding of his face in a regular ministry. The prophecy is true in this sense that his practical work was over."

26. *Pure from the blood of all men.* Compare Acts 18.6.

27. This explains why his conscience is clear; if they rejected the gospel, it was not from failure on his part to proclaim it.

28. *Bishops.* See Acts 13.2; 14.23. The Greek word επισκοπος, *episkopos,* means literally *overseer,* as it is translated in King James' Version.—*To feed.* "Be shepherd of."—*The Church of the Lord.* R. V. M., Some ancient authorities, including the two oldest manuscripts, read *God.*—*Purchased.* R. V. M., Greek, *acquired.*

29. See Matt. 7.15; John 10.12.

30. *And from among your own selves.* See 2 Tim. 2.17; Rev. 2.2.—*Perverse things.* Perverted from the truth.

32. *The word of his grace.* "His gracious promises."—*The inheritance among all that are sanctified.* "The original Old Testament thought of salvation was to obtain a lot or portion of ground in Canaan, and to have secure possession of it, and these ideas have now been expanded into a share of spiritual blessings and security for their continuance" (*Lindsay*).

33. *I coveted no man's silver.* True wealth does not consist in silver and gold and apparel; his lack of care for these things was an example for them.

34. *Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered.* See Acts 18.3; 1 Cor. 4.12; 1 Thess. 3.8.

35. *Ye ought to help the weak.* Whether by "the weak" Paul meant those weak in faith, or in body, or in means, is disputed.—*The words of the Lord Jesus.* This saying of Christ is the only one in the New Testament that is not recorded in the Gospels. See Luke 14.12-14.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

22. *Not knowing the things that shall befall me there.*

> As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prairies,
> Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,
> So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
> Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has attained it.
>
> *Longfellow,* in *Evangeline.*

28. *Take heed.* The teaching of the charge is most aptly summed up in the words of the Anglican Ordinal, in which the bishop reminds the candidates for the priesthood of the weighty office to which they are called—"To be messengers, wardens, and stewards of the Lord: to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever." *R. B. Rackham.*

29. *Ye knew that these hands ministered unto my necessities.* While many Americans are looking up their remote ancestors to provide themselves with a

crest and coat of arms, a few follow the example of early English families and adopt some emblem which suggests a noteworthy incident in their own history. One millionaire not ashamed of the source of his wealth, has a derrick engraved on his seal. Another family, enriched by the manufacture of furniture, has adopted a tree as a crest. *Youth's Companion.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

19. *With tears.* This shows the intensity of Paul's anxiety for the Ephesians. Tears under any strong emotion were common among oriental people.

20. *I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable.* Such openness was quite contrary to the religious ideas of the Ephesians. Mysteries, open only to the initiated, abounded at that period; and, as elsewhere, secrecy and esotericism were important elements in Ephesian superstition. Such ideas of a knowledge known only to the enlightened few, who are the "elect," the "spiritual," the "knowing ones," were soon to invade the Church. In his Epistles to the Collossians Paul had to combat its incipient traces. *R. B. Rackham.*

24. *So that I may accomplish my course.* Without doubt, Paul, as a Hellenist, had seen in his youth the Greek games. In fact, there has been found at Tarsus a Greek inscription which was set up as a monument at the termination of the walls surrounding the race-course; by which is proved, what is not elsewhere found in written sources, that the native city of Paul possessed a race-course. *Lechler,* in *Apostelgeschichte.*

28. *Bishops.* When Paul began organizing the little Christian communities which he founded, after the model of the Mother Church at Jerusalem, by appointing elders in every city, a Greek term was needed to denote the unfamiliar office. This need was served by the word ἐπίσκοπος, Bishop, Overseer. The term was used, like the English word Superintendent, to denote a variety of offices, notably the treasurers or wardens of the temple; or the elected officers of a guild or confraternity, whether of a religious or of a purely social character. To the Jew the Christian Church naturally presented itself as a new synagogue. To the Gentile, as a new kind of guild or confraternity. *Hastings Rashdall,* in *Christus in Ecclesia.*

33. *Apparel.* It is said that the Ephesians were especially noted for their luxurious apparel; among orientals it was accounted an important part of their wealth.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

About a year has passed since the riot at Ephesus, the subject of our lesson two weeks ago. The outbreak ended Paul's labors in that city. He went first to Troas (2 Cor. 2.12) and then to Philippi, where Titus joined him and brought good news from the Church at Corinth. Several months were spent in "these parts"—Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Macedonia. Paul passed into Greece and during his three months sojourn at Corinth wrote his Epistle to the Romans. With the money he had collected for the Church, Paul then began his journey to Jerusalem. He had intended sailing from Cenchreæ, the port of Corinth, directly to Syria, but learning of a plot the Jews had made against his life, he changed his plans and went back by the way he had come through Macedonia. Troas was the place of meeting for himself and other delegates to Jerusalem whom he had sent in advance. The longer route made it impossible for him to reach Jerusalem in time for the Passover, as he had hoped to do; and he now aimed to arrive there at Pentecost, fifty days later. This gave him time to stop at Philippi. Luke is now with him, for the *we* appears again in the text. He sailed from Neapolis, the port of Philippi, for Troas, where the others were awaiting him, and there spent a week. His companions took ship from there, sailing around the promontory to Assos whither Paul went by land and joined them. In a few days their ship reached Miletus, stopping for the nights when the wind fell at Mitylene, a point opposite Chios, and again opposite Samos. Paul had passed by Ephesus, for he had not time to visit the Church there, but at Miletus he sent for the elders of that Church to come and meet him there.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Miletus was on the coast about thirty miles south of Ephesus. It is now about ten miles inland. See the map, page 304.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Follow Paul's journey on the map from Ephesus to Corinth and back to Troas. (See the Historical Background.) On the last night of Paul's stay in Troas, he preached to the disciples in a room on the third story of a house. There were many lights burning, and the room was crowded and hot. At midnight a lad named Eutychus was overcome by sleep and fell from the window where he was seated, to the pavement below. He was taken up as dead, and great was the excitement and sorrow. But Paul rushed down and embraced him, like Elisha of old, and told the people that he would live. After sharing in the Lord's Supper, Paul talked on till morning came, when friends brought the lad alive and there was great rejoicing.

From Troas to Assos and then to Miletus Paul journeyed. Find Miletus on your map. About how far was it from Ephesus?

For Older Pupils. A year ago we had a lesson in which Samuel, the last of the Judges, gave up his official position. You remember how he assembled the people at Gilgal where Saul was made king, and then in a solemn address called them to witness that his administration had been wholly just and honorable and in words that showed his deep love and interest in their welfare, warned and exhorted them, urging them to fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all their heart. There are many points of resemblance between that farewell speech of Samuel at Gilgal and Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus.

Like Samuel, Paul wished the elders to cherish a just and affectionate recollection of his ministry, and he called them to witness that his life among them had been true, an example worthy of their imitation. Like Samuel, he wished to impress on the people the responsibility which henceforth was to be theirs, and he warned them of the dangers that awaited them, from within and without, and exhorting them to take heed unto themselves, he commended them to God—they needed only to fear and serve Him and all would be well. There is a pathetic side to this last scene that was not at Gilgal, for it is Paul's farewell, and the people assembled at the seaside sorrow most of all for this that he has told them, that they shall see his face no more. It is always hard to say good-bye to those with whom one has lived and worked and whom one has learned to love. If we were old Romans, Dr. Babcock tells us, who thought "Vale!" meant "forever," we might well hesitate to speak the word, but "good-bye" for Christians, even if it should be for the last time on earth, is only the difference between "good-night" and "good-morning," and if it comes hesitatingly, one should stretch it out into the loveliest of wishes, "God be with you." This was Paul's way, he commended his friends and co-workers to God.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I I HOLD NOT MY LIFE AS DEAR UNTO MYSELF

Two Ways of Holding Life. A recent writer calls attention to the notice in a metropolitan paper of the death of a prominent citizen. The notice stated his name, an historic one, and mentioned his family, then it gave the various social organizations with which he had been connected, and concluded with these words: "He was a well-known patron of the turf; he was one of the best connoisseurs of wines in America, and was always present at every first night at the theatre and opera." Evidently this man held his life as dear unto himself, not as dear unto his Maker.

Paul does not say that he does not hold his life of any account, of any value, but that he does not hold it of any account as dear unto himself. He does not consider that his life was given to him alone, that it has worth only

for what he himself can "get out of it," but he has a higher motive in living—for to me to live is Christ, he says, Phil. 1.21, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me, Gal. 2.20. He measures the value of his life wholly by what he can accomplish for Christ.

Spinning Tops. I know an idiot boy who spent his life in spinning a top. No doubt that boy in his dim consciousness passed through all our mortal experiences. He had his good days and his bad days, and sometimes when he went home he had the experience of one who had won a battle, and sometimes the experience of one who had lost a battle. But there is something strangely incomplete and pathetic, spending the whole of life in spinning a top. But if there were no larger significance in life than "what shall we eat or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed," if it were not more than that, then that idiot boy with his top was a striking picture of the race. What are we all doing but spinning tops? The tops vary, some are big and some are small; some have more gilt than others. What is the whole universe but a great scene of empty top-spinning? The whirling suns, the stars in their courses, the planets in their movements—what are they all but colossal tops driven by idiotic forces, through eternities, in aimless cycles? Ah, if there be no intelligence in the world, no spirituality in its government, no great issue to it all, then it is a scene of pathetic emptiness, failure and despair! Only a larger interpretation of life will satisfy you. Life is utterly disappointing and incomplete without spiritual ideals, principles, ideas, and hopes. Man without spiritual instincts is always asking, Is life worth while? The man who whips his top for seventy years and keeps it going with sweat and blood, until the hum of the top dies in the silence of the graves, ought to be discontented with such a life. Discontent is the only natural thing in the universe if there are in life no deep moral purposes and no spiritual consequences; but it is another thing if the spiritual note is brought into it. The Church of Christ does not ask, "Is life worth living?" Life in the hand of a spiritual man is linked in with a larger education. It is a discipline out of which you come kings, and it leads you into a larger and imperishable inheritance. To the worldly man life is a blunder, a jest, a tragedy; to the spiritual man a discipline, a science, a triumph. The spiritual life that lasts is the real life. The spiritual instincts survive all changes. Without the spiritual instincts life is an unsolvable problem. But given to you the love of God, the sense of His wise government, and the assurance that the afflictions of the present time will work out for you a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory, and you will find rest unto your soul. Condensed from an article on *The Life Indeed* by *Dr. W. L. Watkinson,* in *Homiletic Review.*

The Real Question. "To be or not to be, that is the question," quoted a young man who was utterly discouraged with life. The answer of his friend, as given in the *Youth's Companion,* is remarkably sane and helpful. "That is *not* the question at all. The question whether we are to be or not is a question we were not asked in the beginning, and have no right to raise. We can not discuss it with knowledge either of the joys that remain or the duties that are impending, nor yet the future shame that awaits us in some after life for the cowardly shirking of the burdens of this one.

'To be or not to be' is the question of the stage, propounded by a half-crazed character in a plot. The question of the real man on the stage of life, is, 'Being, how shall I make the most of life?' For we *are,* whether we like it or not; and we have no right but to be, and to be the most and best we can. Life is a discipline, it is not given us for our own pleasure alone, nor can any man live it or end it and affect himself alone. Life is the gift of God; and no man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself. Life is before you, long years of it, I hope. Duties are before you, earth is before you, with needs and hopes and sorrows, sorrows needing your strength and comfort. Whether you shall be or not is God's question, and for the present you know His answer. Your question is what you shall be, and how."

My Wish.

Let me but live my life from year to year
With forward face and unreluctant soul,

Not hastening to nor turning from the goal;
Not mourning for the things that disappear
In the dim past, nor holding back in fear
From what the future veils; but with a whole
And happy heart, that pays its toll
To Youth and Age, and travels on with cheer.

Henry van Dyke.

II That I may accomplish my Course

Paul's Goal. How often Paul draws his figures from the athletic games! Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run, that ye may attain (1 Cor. 9.24). I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3.14.) I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 7.8). Here in his speech to the Ephesian elders Paul tells them that as the object of the race is the goal, so the object of his life is the completion of his course, the accomplishing of the ministry assigned him by God; the value of his life to him was not what he might get out of it, but what he might do in it. Just as in the stadium the goal, where the judge sat reward in hand, was plainly in the view of the runners as they stood at the starting point at the other end, so Paul would have his hearers mindful of the object which it is their aim to reach in their life's course. His own object never changed, and his purpose to attain it never faltered.

To me to live is what? "To me to live is myself!" Suppose that it is so. What kind of an end to a life is this? How much nobler a center our life is worthy of—our one life—which is to live forevermore; which is to live with a great center or a mean one—meanly or greatly forevermore! Think of living with oneself for ever and for ever. Think of having lived, living now, and evermore, living only for this. Look with complacency on such a life if you can—

"I lived for myself, I thought for myself,
For myself, and none beside,
Just as if Jesus had never lived,
As if He had never died."

"To me to live is Christ." Contrast it with all the other objects of life; take all the centers out of all the great lives, and compare them one by one. Can you match the life-creed of Paul—"to me to live is Christ"?

"To me to live is—business," "To me to live is—pleasure," "To me to live is—myself." We can all tell in a moment what our religion is really worth. "To me to live is"—*what?* What are we living for? What rises naturally to our heart when we press it with a test like this: "To me to live is"—what? First thoughts, it is said, are best in matters of conscience. What was the first thought that came into your hearts just then? What word trembled on your lip just now—"to me to live is"—was it business, was it money, was it self, was it Christ?

The time will come when we shall ask ourselves why we ever crushed this infinite substance of our life within these narrow bounds, and centered that which lasts for ever on what must pass away. In the perspective of eternity all lives will seem poor, and small, and lost, and self-condemned beside a life for Christ. *Henry Drummond.*

III Missionary Topic Bound in the Spirit

Paul a Follower of Christ. Paul declared that he went to Jerusalem "bound in the spirit." He believed that to go to Jerusalem was an obligation laid on him by God, and nothing could swerve him from his course. The nature of the bonds and afflictions which, he was certain, awaited him there, he knew not, but they weighed nothing in the scale compared with his duty.

We naturally recall the time when his Master went up to Jerusalem bound, too, in the Spirit, perfectly sure of the bonds and afflictions awaiting Him, but determined to fulfil His course. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem," He told His disciples, "and all the things that are written through the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of Man." He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.

Dr. Grenfell. The spirit that animated Paul has been the same in countless other followers of Christ. Deeds of self-denial that would be difficult to do from purely human motives, become a willing service under the impelling force of a divinely given command. Dr. Grenfell is a successor of Paul who does his noble work because he is bound in the spirit. "Fear of the sea is quite incomprehensible to Dr. Grenfell," Mr. Norman Duncan tells us in "Dr. Grenfell's Parish." "It is chiefly because of his simple and splendid faith that he is an instrument in God's hands—God's to do with as He will, as he would say. His faith is exceptional, I am sure—child-like, steady, over-mastering, and withal, healthy. It takes something such as the faith he has to move a man to run a steamer at full speed in the fog when there is ice on every hand. It is hardly credible, but quite true! neither wind, nor ice, nor fog, nor all combined, can keep his boat in harbor when there comes a call for help from beyond. The doctor clambers cheerfully out on the bowsprit and keeps both eyes open. "As the Lord wills," says he, "whether for wreck or service. I am about His business."

Father Damien. Robert Louis Stevenson has pictured the Leper settlement of the island of Molakai, one of the Hawaiian Islands, in these words: "It is crowded with abominable deformations of our common manhood, a population such as surrounds us in the horror of nightmare, every fourth face a blot on the landscape, the butt ends of human beings lying there almost unrecognizable, but still breathing, still thinking, still remembering." Father Damien was a Roman Catholic missionary who was sent to Honolulu. There he learned of the dreadful leper settlement on Molakai where there was no one to help or teach those wretched human beings, and he felt impelled to devote to them his life. "He went there and shut with his own hand the door of his own sepulchre, and made his great renunciation, and slept that first night under a tree with his rotting brethren, alone with pestilence, and looking forward with what courage God only knows to a life-time of dressing sores and stumps." For twelve years he was their physician, magistrate, carpenter, teacher,—everything, and then he labored on heroically four years longer while suffering himself from the terrible disease, till death brought him release. Is there any explanation to give of such a great renunciation save that Father Damien went there "bound in the spirit," and that he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him?

SENTENCE SERMONS

Sawing wood is as honorable as the pursuit of philosophy. *George D. Herron.*

Make the most of your best for the sake of others. *Edward Burne-Jones.*

Life is what we are alive to. *M. D. Babcock.*

The true end of life is simply to do God's will. *Henry Drummond.*

To him that knoweth not the port to which he is bound, no wind can be favorable. *Leighton.*

Find your purpose, and fling your life out to it. *Phillips Brooks.*

A sacred burden is this life ye bear;
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly,
Stand up beneath it steadfastly.
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin,
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win. *Fanny Kemble.*

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal. Matt. 6.9.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Paul taught the Ephesians the great essentials of a Christian's life—repentance toward God and faith in Christ. Have we learned them?

Paul knew why he was alive. There was a great underlying purpose in his living. Are we living in this life without a purpose? Let us "gird up the loins of our mind," as Peter says, and think on these things.

Paul held not his life as dear unto himself. Do we? Are we trying to

get out of it all we can, or are we trying to do in it all we may? Do we say that the world owes us a living, or do we say that we owe our life to the world? Paul's life's course was an ever onward one; so may ours be. Paul never slackened his efforts to reach his goal; we need not. Paul's motive in life was to be and do in it all that God meant him to be and to do; his motive should be ours. Paul could say, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; may his glad assurances be ours.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

On his way to Jerusalem Paul stopped at Miletus and sent for the elders of the Church at Ephesus to meet him there. His farewell words are full of tenderness and exhortation. First he summed up his work among them, reminding them how faithfully and how humbly he had served the Lord while his heart was filled with anxiety for them and his life was threatened by Jewish plots, how he had told them all things needful for them to know, and had taught them in public and in private the essentials of religion, repentance toward God and faith toward Christ. Next he spoke of his own plans and probable fate. He was constrained by an overpowering sense of duty to go to Jerusalem, not knowing what might happen to him there; bonds and afflictions had been his portion everywhere and they awaited him in the future; he held not his life as dear to himself; his sole purpose was to run his course well, fulfil the work to which he had been called, the proclaiming of the gospel; they would not see him again, and he called them to witness that he had faithfully warned and taught them and he was blameless if they failed to follow the truth. Then he urged them to take heed to themselves and to their charge, to be faithful in their care of the Church for which Christ had died; they would have to contend with false teachers from without and from within their own number, therefore let them be on their guard and remember how he had labored for them. And then he commended them to the care of God who was able to strengthen them and keep them in the household of faith, and urged them to follow the example he had set in not coveting wealth, but in laboring for his own support and that of others; thus they ought to labor for the weak and remember that the Lord Jesus had Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. As Paul concluded his speech they all knelt down while Paul prayed with them, and then in deep sorrow at the thought that they should have their beloved leader with them no more, the elders embraced and kissed him, and escorted him to the ship.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Verse 24 and the Book of Ecclesiastes. Dr. H. T. Fowler divides Ecclesiastes into two divisions; the first he calls "the search for a satisfying object of life's effort," and the second, "the best course open to man."

Profit the standard of Paul in teaching. He shrank not from declaring unto the Ephesians "anything that was profitable." This should be our attitude in regard to truths discussed in this class, whether they refer to questions of "higher criticism" or of modern problems. What kind of truths are profitable for us?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. When had Paul traversed the island of Cyprus and what important event then occurred? (Lesson V, 2d quarter.) 2. When was the Gospel brought to Phœnicia? (Acts 11.19.) 3. When had Paul brought good news to the churches there? (Acts 15.3.) 4. When before had Paul had a prayer-meeting by the seaside? (Lesson I of this quarter.) 5. What earlier lesson had its scene at Cæsarea? (Lesson I, 2d quarter.) 6. What have you already learned about Philip? (Lessons VIII, IX, and X of 1st quarter.) 7. About Agabus? (Lesson IV, 2d quarter.) 8. When did Jesus make a prophecy in regard to Peter by referring to the use of the girdle? (John 21.18.) 9. What request had Paul made of the Romans, in Rom. 15.30, 31, written shortly before he started on this journey? 10. What verses in the last lesson show why Paul persisted in going to Jerusalem in spite of warnings? (22-24.) 12. Give the course of Paul's last Journey to Jerusalem from the time he left Greece, Acts 20.3.

LESSON XI—SEPTEMBER 12

CLOSE OF PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Read Acts 21.1-17. Commit verses 13, 14.

Golden Text

The will of the Lord be done. Acts 21.14.

LESSON TEXT Acts 21.1-17

1 And when it came to pass that we were parted from them and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: 2 and having found a ship crossing over unto Phœnicia, we went aboard, and set sail. 3 And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unlade her burden. 4 And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. 5 And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way till we were out of the city: and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, and bade each other farewell; 6 and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. 8 And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him. 9 Now this man had four virgin daughters, who prophesied. 10 And as we tarried there some days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named Agabus. 11 And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. 12 And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. 14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

15 And after these days we took up our baggage and went up to Jerusalem. 16 And there went with us also *certain* of the disciples from Cæsarea, bringing *with them* one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *We were parted from them.* The *we* includes Luke as well as Paul and his company. The parting was from the Ephesian elders, 20.17-38.—*Parted from* in Greek means literally *torn away from.*

4. *And having found the disciples.* The gospel had been carried to Tyre by those who fled from Jerusalem because of Paul's persecution, Acts 11.19. See Acts 15.3.

8. *Philip, the evangelist, who was one of the seven.* Review Acts 6.5; 8.5-13, 26-40.

9. *Daughters, who prophesied.* Perhaps they, as well as Agabus and others, warned Paul of the sufferings that he would have to endure at Jerusalem.

10, 11. *Agabus.* Acts 11.28.—*So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man.* See verse 33. The prophecy was fulfilled, though not in the letter; the Gentiles bound Paul, but that action was brought about by the hostile Jews.

12. *They of that place.* The Christians of Cæsarea.—*Besought him not to go.* Compare Peter's words to Jesus, Matt. 16.21-23.

14. Compare Matt. 26.42.

15. *Our baggage.* The word *carriages,* in the A. V., is used in the Old English sense of things carried, baggage. In the baggage was the alms being taken to Jerusalem, Acts 24.17.

16. *Bringing with them one Mnason.* The words *with them,* are printed in italics to show that they are not in the Greek: the margin suggests the reading "bringing *us to* one Mnason." The Bezan text reads "and, reaching a certain village, we were in the house of Mnason, an early disciple; and going out thence we came to Jerusalem." The distance between Cæsarea and Jerusalem was too great for one day's journey, and Mnason's home may have been at that "certain village." According to our text, however, it was at Jerusalem.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

3. *The ship was to unlade her burden.* To the skipper's eye cargo was the important thing; the little Jew passenger and his company were of small account. How blind we are, and how little we know what is great and what is small! How trivial material interests swell themselves out and loom large! How asonished that sailor would have been if he had been told that his passenger was the most important man in the world at that moment, and that his vessel would be remembered forever because that Jew had trod her deck! *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Expositions of the Book of Acts.*

4. *These said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem.* And yet it is under the guidance of this same Spirit that he is on the way thither. Is the divine counsel divided? Did Paul disobey the voice of God? It must be allowed that the prophets of the church were under the influence of the Spirit; but these church prophets were not so inspired that their voice was equivalent to the voice of God. The voice of the New Testament prophet was always worthy of attention and respect, but it was not always authoritative nor even correct. The rule by which it was to be tried is found in 1 Thess. 5.20, 21—"Despise not prophesyings, prove all things, hold fast to that which is good," which is just what Paul would be most likely to do in this case. He would say to these brethren that there was no doubt that bonds and afflictions awaited him, for he had heard that prediction again and again in this journey. But he would note, when it was said that he must not go to Jerusalem, how tender solicitude was mistaken for the utterances of God's Spirit, for he himself was so unmistakable directed that he was moving forward "bound in the Spirit" (20.22). Surely the man who was going in the teeth of the divine will could not receive such comfort as Paul was given in Jerusalem (23.11). *J. M. Stifler, The Acts of the Apostles.*

8. Philip is here called the evangelist, a term which literally denotes one who preaches the gospel. In the apostolic ages, evangelists seem to have held an office similar to that of missionaries. They were set over no particular church, but preached the gospel among the heathen: they were itinerant preachers. Eusebius thus describes their office: "After laying the foundation of the faith in foreign parts, as the peculiar object of their mission, and after appointing others as shepherds to the flock, and committing to them the care of those that had been recently introduced, they went again to other regions and nations with the grace and co-operation of God." Afterwards the name became appropriated to the four writers of the life of Christ. *Paton J. Gloag,* in *Commentary on Acts.*

13. *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.* What do you think is the characteristic word for the description of Paul? Mr. Spurgeon said the word was "ready," "Paul the Ready." You know what he said to the people at Rome: "I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." It was the position of peril, but he was ready, ready for service. And in the letter that he wrote to Timothy, writing it as an old and broken man in a damp dungeon and in darkness, he said, "I am

now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." *W. W. More,* in *Record of Christian Work.*

15. *We went up to Jerusalem.* Never had Paul gone to Jerusalem without a heart full of emotion—neither in those early years, when he came an enthusiastic boy from Tarsus to the school of Gamaliel—nor on his return from Damascus, after the greatest change that could have passed over an inquisitor's mind,—nor when he went with Barnabas from Antioch to the Council, which was to decide an anxious controversy. Now he went to Jerusalem calmly and resolutely, though doubtful of his reception among the Christian brethren, and not knowing what would happen on the morrow. *Conybeare and Howson,* in *Life and Epistles of St. Paul.*

17. *When we were come to Jerusalem.* The school of Gamaliel, the synagogue of the Libertines, the house where the high priest had given him his commission to Damascus, the spot where the reddened grass had drunk the blood of Stephen, must have stirred painful memories. But never had he trod the streets of the Holy City with so deep a sadness as now that he entered it, avoiding notice as much as possible, in the little caravan of Cæsarean pilgrims and Gentile converts. He was going into a city where friends were few, and where well-nigh every one of the myriads among whom he moved was an actual or potential enemy. *F. W. Farrar,* in *The Life and Work of St. Paul.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

9. *Four virgin daughters, who prophesied.* In the Apostolic Church women were admitted into the service of ministry of the Church. Phoebe was a deacon of the Church at Cenchrea (Rom. 16.1), and Philip's daughters were regular preachers. Paul prohibited women preaching at Corinth (1 Cor. 14.34), and at Ephesus (1 Tim. 2.12); but this prohiibtion was local, doubtless for reasons well understood in these two cities, and can not be looked on as a rule for all times and places. *T. M. Lindsay,* in *Commentary on the Acts.*

10. *Girdle.* A girdle is worn by both men and women to fasten their loose, flowing robes. It may be of leather, or of cloth sometimes richly embroidered with silk or with silver or gold thread. It is several yards long, and is wound around the waist.

11. *Taking Paul's girdle.* His revelation was made in that dramatic form which impresses the mind with a stronger sense of reality than mere words can do, and which was made familiar to the Jews of old by the practice of the Hebrew prophets. As Isaiah (20) loosed the sackcloth from his loins and put off his shoes from his feet, to declare how the Egyptian captains should be led away into Assyria naked and barefoot,—or as the girdle of Jeremiah (13), in its strength and in its decay, was made a type of the people of Israel in their privilege and their fall,—Agabus, in like manner, used the imagery of action. *Conybeare and Howson, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Luke has given us a very detailed account of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem. His voyage from Troas to Miletus, and from there to Patara, was made in a small craft which did not venture out into the open sea but "hugged the coast," going from one island to another, but at Patara he took passage on a large merchant vessel whose course was straight across the sea to Tyre. We now come back to the old, familiar places in Palestine, long since lost sight of in Luke's narrative.—Phœnicia and Tyre and Ptolemais and Cæsarea and Jerusalem, and to old friends—Philip and Agabus and James and the rest at Jerusalem.

The time was the month before Pentecost, A. D. 56. See the varied dates, page 19 of this Guide.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

On the way from Miletus on the coast of the province of Asia to Patara in the province of Lycia, the coasting vessel stopped over night at two islands, Cos and Rhodes. The large merchant vessel taken by Paul and his company

at Patara probably stopped at Myra, in Lycia, and then sailed straight across to Tyre, in Phœnicia, a distance of about three hundred and forty miles, going south of the island of Cyprus, and therefore "leaving it on the left." For Cyprus see page 175; for Tyre and Ptolemais, map opposite page 11; Cæsarea page 139; Jerusalem, page 399. The term Syria, as used in our lesson, means the Roman province which included Phœnicia and Cilicia.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. At what island did Paul's ship stop the first night out from Miletus? Cos was noted as "the garden of the Ægean."The next night when the wind fell his boat had reached a larger island. What was it? Rhodes, the island of roses, as the Greek name means. On one side of an ancient coin of the island there is the representation of a rose, and on the other the head of Apollo, the sun-god, who, the ancient Greeks believed, raised the island out of the depths of the sea and never failed thereafter to shine upon it every day. There were 3,000 statues here, one of them the famous Colossus of Rhodes, a giant statue of Apollo, but of none of these things do we hear. Paul was bound for Jerusalem. For what purpose?

Coin of Rhodes

For Older Pupils. What one of the "Seven Wonders of the World" had Paul seen at Ephesus? On this last journey of his to Jerusalem, he saw at Rhodes on the island of the same name, a second great Wonder, the Colossus of Rhodes. It has commonly been said, though it is now doubted, that this colossal bronze statue of Apollo stood at the entrance to the harbor, each foot on a mote, and the vessels entering or leaving the port sailed between its legs. Shakespeare seems to have had this in mind when he made Cassius say of Julius Cæsar—

> "He doth bestride the narrow world
> Like a Colossus; and we petty men
> Walk under his huge legs."

An earthquake in 244 B. C. had broken off the statue above the knees, and at the time of Paul's visit the upper part lay prostrate on the ground. As Paul looked at it he thought, so Dean Farrar suggests, of Dagon "when he fell flat and shamed his worshippers," or he pointed to it as a symbol of the coming day when all idols should be abolished.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Kindly-meaning Discouragers

Stumbling-Blocks. During the Boer War when the Boers were encamped against the city of Ladysmith, the English officer in command of the besieged city learned that a soldier was going about among those who were valiantly defending the city, and telling them that they could never hold out till help arrived. The soldier was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for being a "discourager." If all "discouragers" could be restrained from plying their words, what a world of difference it would make!

Hardest of all to endure are the discouraging words of kind-hearted friends who, with the best of intentions, seek to dissuade one from following a course of duty. When Jesus announced to the disciples His intention of going up to Jerusalem where He told them suffering and death awaited Him, Peter in his devoted love for his Master sought to dissuade Him from His purpose. "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee," he exclaimed impulsively. "Thou art a stumbling-block unto me," said Jesus to him; "for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."

Paul met with many such stumbling-blocks when he, too, had "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." He well knew the danger he was incurring in going there, but he had counted the cost and was ready to lay down his life there if need be, for he went "bound in the spirit." At Tyre, the Christians

sought to dissuade him from going, and when at Cæsarea his own close traveling companions united their words and their tears with those of the Christians of that place in a persistent effort to keep him out of danger, he was greatly moved. "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?" he exclaimed. Only when they saw that he would not be persuaded did they cease their importunities.

Similar was Luther's experience when weeping friends tried to dissuade him from going to the Diet of Worms, and similar was his spirit of determination to do what was right at all hazards to himself.

Attempts to Dissuade Missionaries from their Purpose. When Robert Moffatt went to Cape Town on his way to Namaqualand, he was there urged to give up his vain attempt to convert those savages. The government at Cape Town had offered $500 for the arrest or death of a Hottentot chief called Africaner, who with several hundred followers was the terror of the Dutch farmers in that section. He would certainly be killed, his skin would be used for drum-heads, his skull for a drinking-cup. "Were you an old man, it would not matter, for you would soon have died anyway," one kindly old woman told him, "but you are so young, and you are going to be a prey to that monster!" Like Paul, Moffatt persisted in his purpose, and a year later he took Africaner with him to Cape Town to show the government officials that they need no longer fear him, as he had become a Christian.

A century ago a young man in Williams' College resolved that it was his duty to be a missionary. There were in those days no great missionary societies, and the dangers in the young man's course were plainly very great. His father refused his consent. The son could not give up his duty. The father was a clergyman, and he called a meeting of brother ministers to discuss the matter. One of them was asked to begin the council with prayer. These were his words:

"Almighty God, Thou knowest that Thy servant Mills consecrated this boy to Thee in baptism to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to serve Thee, and now that the boy wants to preach the gospel to the heathen, Thy servant Mills is mad. Amen."

"There is no need of any conference," said the father as they arose from their knees, "Samuel may go."

II Steadfastness of Purpose

Paul's Persistence. The solicitous spirit of Paul's companions at Cæsarea which made them care more for his safety and freedom from trouble than for his mission to Jerusalem is common; somewhat rare is the inflexible determination of Paul to follow the path of duty at all hazards and in spite of all entreaties. Paul was bringing gifts from the Gentile Christians to the poor Christian Jews, he knew how great the effect of these gifts of love would be in uniting harmoniously the two branches of the church, he was convinced that he was going on a divinely sent mission, the Spirit who had told him of the bonds and afflictions awaiting him had also told him to go on, and that the naming of the perils had been to prepare him to meet them, to strengthen his courage,—for true courage is but increased by the presence of perils. Paul's persistency of purpose, in spite of loving entreaties and certainty of danger, is magnificent. Easy it is to make a resolve and carry it out at the time of the making, but only a moral hero marches steadily onward to his appointed goal, "steadfast, immovable," after weeks and months of every kind of opposition.

What One Man accomplished by Persistency of Purpose. There was a man called Benjamin Waugh, who was enjoying the delights of some secluded ministry, all the enjoyment that comes to a studious life. He heard the wail of a little child, and he left his studies and his books, went out into the night, and encountered the tempest, antagonisms on every side. He only wanted to protect the ill-used child against the heavy, brutal hand of oppression, but he was opposed and antagonized, confronted on every side by opposition. The police, especially the chief constables of the county, ranged themselves in opposition to him. He had to fight and fight and fight; and now to-day we have a great and popular society for the protection of ill-used little children, which must be traced to the majestic outgoing of a man who said: "I will despise

ease, leisure, pleasure, treasure; I choose to be one with the ill-used children rather than to enjoy the pleasures of luxurious seclusion, even for a season." *John Henry Jowett,* in *The Homiletic Review.*

Pressing toward the Goal. The business of a river is to flow. Its banks may be beautiful or unpleasant; its current strong or sluggish; its skies blue or clouded; its waters may mirror flowers in spring and ferns in summer; may float the dead leaves of fall, or be hemmed in and pressed by the ice in winter—it must flow on.

A noisy brook in its youth, a noble river at last, so deep that men say, "There go the ships," majestically entering the ocean; but from its birth to its bourne its business is to flow. Here eddies may seem to be turning it back, there the current may be checked by a resisting arm of land, but the central stream moves steadily onward as though led by the hand of destiny.

Is not this steadfastness to mark, to make, the character of your lives? Is it not God's will that we should press steadily on to our goal in obedience to Him, in channels of His choosing, whether in sunshine or shadow, in the cheer of spring or in the chill of winter, neither detained by pleasure nor deterred by pain? *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

III Missionary Topic Bringing them on the Way

The Farewell. Luke seems to enjoy lingering over that scene on the seashore where the men, women, and children, all the membership of that Christian Church at Tyre, came with Paul to his ship and after a season of prayer bade him farewell. They had been strangers to him a week before, Paul had to seek them out when he had a week's stay there while his ship was unloading, but he had received from them a hearty welcome. At the parting at Miletus there had been sorrow over the breaking of a long personal companionship and friendship, which could not exist here at Tyre, but the kindly farewell is sincere and heartening, and Paul is brought on his way with good cheer. How much it must have meant to him we can almost read between Luke's lines.

Such sympathy and encouragement as that given by the people of Tyre to Paul are needed by every one, and especially, perhaps, by God's messengers away from home. When John Thomas, more than a century ago, had been pleading eloquently for missionaries for India, Andrew Fuller said: "We saw there was a gold mine in India, but it seemed almost as deep as the center of the earth. Who will venture to explore it? we asked. 'I will go down,' responded Wilbur Cary, 'but remember that you must hold the ropes.'"

Christian people in all lands have been holding the ropes for missionaries ever since by their gifts of money and sympathy and prayers, and who shall say how great a share the comfort of sympathy from the home church has had in the success of the men and women in foreign fields or in isolated regions of the home land?

The Help of Prayer. It is said that when the wayworn laborers of Iona reached the most difficult part of their journey they suddenly felt their burdens grow lighter because there they met the secret prayers of their aged master Columba. A missionary suddenly becomes buoyant in China because some one in England is at that very moment on his knees, says Dr. J. H. Jowett.

The Help of Love. Miss Fedelia Fiske, the missionary, was at one time almost utterly discouraged, nothing but defeat in her work seemed possible, and her burdens were almost heavier than could be borne. A native convert sat on the mat beside her, a poor, ignorant woman who could do nothing to help her, so she thought, but that woman straightened her back up against her and said, "Lean on me; lean on me; if you love me, lean hard." "No one can know what that expression of love did for me," said Miss Fiske; "it gave me strength, because love makes us strong."

It is the loneliness, the lack of comradeship with other Christians, that makes life so hard for missionaries in remote places. Said Mr. Waggoner, a missionary in Alaska: "I have been six years in Klanock, and only one Christian white man has come into the place during that time—a sea captain who came in on a boat. Our little girl was taken from us three years ago. The only one

who came in to have a word of prayer was my native interpreter; he prayed in his own language. The work is not hard, the climate is not hard, the lack of food is not hard; we have no time to think about these things. It is the isolation of the field that is the hardship."

"At one station which I visited last February," said Mr. Waggoner, "one of the Alaskan natives who is trying to carry on the work, said, 'We have held all our meetings, but now I have preached all I know.' He can't read, and for months he had preached the sermons he had learned from our missionaries, and he had preached himself out. Of course we gave him fresh instruction. We are all hungry for spiritual food, and how can a man renew his strength without food?"

Books, magazines and religious papers a year or two old, how much they can do to cheer and help the struggling minister in the frontier town who has no opportunity for good reading, no chance to exchange views with others, no stimulating life.

A Missionary Box. At the church sewing circle Aunt Lois read an item from a newspaper telling of the good work done by the Rev. Philo A. Townsend. "What of it, Aunt Lois?" asked one of the younger women.

"Why that's the man we packed a missionary box for—let me see—it must be forty years ago. I don't suppose any of you remember, but I do. He was a student then, and a bright one, too, but he had to stop for a while for lack of money. We had no minister at the time, and he came here as a supply. Our church was small and couldn't do much to help him, and I don't know whether he ever could have succeeded if we women hadn't taken hold and helped. We made him up a missionary box. We knit stockings, and made underclothing—good warm flannels, too,—and ever so many useful things. He hadn't spent much money for such things, I'm pretty sure. And besides the useful things, we put in a good many nice little knicknacks and notions.

"I remember that box just as well, and how we sent it to him when he first got back to school. He wrote us a beautiful letter of thanks. And now he's pastor of that great city church! I tell you, girls, this society has done some real good things."

"Do you suppose he remembers it?" asked one of the members.

"I believe I'll write to him and see," said Aunt Lois.

The next meeting of the little society found every one ready to hear the letter which, as they had learned already, Aunt Lois had received. The man had not forgotten. He remembered the very day of the month on which he received the box, and Aunt Lois' letter reached him exactly forty years later.

After the letter was read Aunt Lois recalled some of the sacrifices which the little society had made in the doing of such deeds in the years of its history, and added, "But just one letter like that is enough to pay for all the work of the forty years."

Further inquiry had been made by the members of the society, who now told what they had learned of Mr. Townsend. The good work done for him had been passed on to others. "O girls," said Aunt Lois, "when I think how far a little good goes, when once it gets started, and how it keeps on multiplying itself in ways we can never know, I take new heart, and it makes hard work easy." Condensed from the *Youth's Companion.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

We are not right until we can pray heartily, not say submissively, "Thy will be done!" *George Macdonald.*

All that a true soldier wants to know is that he understands his orders. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

I find the doing of the will of God leaves no time for disputing about His plans. *George Macdonald.*

The man who spreads depression and breeds discouragement ought to be ostracized. *Lyman Abbott.*

Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. 1 Cor. 15.58.

None are more formidable instruments of temptation than well-meaning friends who care more for our comfort than for our character. *A. B. Bruce.*

Pay as little attention to discouragements as possible; plough ahead as a steamer does, rough or smooth, rain or shine. To carry your cargo and make your port is the point. *M. D. Babcock.*

There is naught in this bad world like sympathy;
'Tis so becoming to the soul and face. *Byron.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Do not be discouragers. Do not be a stumbling block in the path of one on duty bent. Be an encourager. Speed him on his way. When Christian was sinking in the Slough of Despond a man called Help came and gave him his hand and drew him out. Be such a help to those who need it, have a word of cheer for every one.

When you see a duty that you should do, is it a resolution or merely a notion that you entertain of doing it? Shall you lightly change your notion at the first opposition you meet?

Are we working out our common, everyday life on the great lines of God's will, as Professor Drummond asks?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

After Paul had parted from the Ephesian elders on the beach at Miletus, he entered the coasting vessel in which he had come from Assos and continued his journey around the western shore of Asia Minor, stopping on successive nights at the islands of Cos and Rhodes and arriving on the third day at Patara. He was hastening to Jerusalem with the offerings of the Gentile Christians, and wished to reach there in time for the festival of Pentecost, therefore at Patara he embarked in a swifter sailing merchant-ship bound directly for Phœnicia. The island of Cyprus was passed on their left as they journeyed southeastward, and Tyre was speedily reached. There the ship's cargo was put off, and the seven days' stay gave Paul an opportunity to visit the Christians in that city. They were told by the Spirit of the dangers awaiting Paul in Jerusalem, and they urged him not to hazard his life, but he was not to be shaken from his purpose. When the time for departure came the little company of men, women and children came with him to the beach, where prayer was offered and farewells were said.

From Tyre the journey was continued to Ptolemais, a day being spent with the Christian community there, and then to Cæsarea. In the home of Philip, the evangelist at Cæsarea, several days were passed. His four daughters possessed the gift of prophecy, and doubtless warned Paul of "bonds and afflictions" ahead, and now the prophet Agabus, coming there from Judea, warned him in no uncertain words. Taking Paul's girdle, Agabus bound with it his own feet and hands, at the same time announcing that the Holy Spirit had said that in like manner the owner of the girdle should be bound at Jerusalem by the Jews and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. Paul's traveling companions joined with the disciples of Cæsarea in beseeching him not to continue his journey to Jerusalem. "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?" exclaimed the great apostle, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." "The will of the Lord be done," then acknowledged they all. Resolute in his purpose to accomplish his divinely given task, Paul went on to Jerusalem, where he was gladly welcomed by the brethren, and received in the home of Mnason, a native of Cyprus.

SUBJECT FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

The difference between courage and foolhardiness.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Bring to class your scrapbook or your note book containing your Life of Paul. Re-read Acts 15.36-21.17.

REVIEW

Golden Text for the Quarter

So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed. Acts 19.20.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF CHAPTERS XV-XXI OF THE ACTS, AND OF TWO LESSONS FROM PAUL'S EPISTLES.

Lesson I. After tarrying awhile in Antioch following their visit to Jerusalem and conference with the church there, Paul and Barnabas decided to revisit the churches they had founded on their first missionary journey. Barnabas wished to take Mark with them, but Paul objected because he had withdrawn from the work on the previous journey. They agreed to separate, Barnabas going with Mark to Cyprus, and Paul with Silas to the cities in Syria and Cilicia and then on to Derbe and Lystra. At Lystra, Timothy joined them. Going through the region of Phrygia and Galatia they reached the border of Mysia. Learning that it was not the divine will that they should preach the word either in the province of Asia, or of Bithynia, they passed on to Troas on the coast. There in a vision at night a man of Macedonia besought Paul to come over into Macedonia and help them. Obedient to the vision, they sailed across to Neapolis and then went a few miles inland to Philippi. On the Sabbath they went to the riverside, where several women were met for prayer; among those who believed Paul's message to them was Lydia and her household who were baptized. At her urgent invitation Paul made her house his home.

For many days a sooth-saying maid at Philippi followed Paul and his company, declaring that they were the servants of the Most High God. She was dispossessed of her sooth-saying powers and no longer able to bring her masters gain. They were greatly angered and haled Paul and Silas before the magistrates, charging them with troubling the city and setting up customs not lawful for Romans to follow. The magistrates ordered them beaten and imprisoned. The jailor put them in the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks.

Lesson II. Suffering as they were, Paul and Silas could yet bravely pray and sing hymns. At midnight, as if in answer to their need, an earthquake threw open the prison doors and loosed their bands. The affrighted jailor was kept from killing himself by Paul's assurance that his prisoners had not escaped, and was led by Paul's words to believe in Jesus and his Saviour. The magistrates, too, were terrified by the earthquake, and in the morning they ordered the release of the prisoners. When they received Paul's message that they had beaten and imprisoned uncondemned Roman citizens they came and humbly besought Paul and Silas to depart. After visiting Lydia's home and cheering the disciples there, they left Philippi.

Lesson III. Paul and Silas journeyed on to Thessalonica. There they taught in the synagogue at first. A great multitude believed their message, and the jealousy of the Jews was aroused. They stirred up the rabble into a mob, and, failing to find Paul and Silas, they seized Jason and brought him before the rulers, charging him with receiving in his house those who were acting contrary to the laws of Cæsar and were proclaiming Jesus as another King. Jason on giving security was allowed to go free. Paul and Silas left the city and went on to Berea, where the people were ready to receive the word and to examine the Scriptures, and where many of them accepted Paul's teaching concerning Christ. Not content with driving Paul from Thessalonica, Jews from that place followed him to Berea and again stirred up the people against him.

Silas and Timothy remained for a time, but Paul was escorted by the brethren as far as Athens.

At Athens Paul's spirit was aroused by the great number of idols he saw everywhere, and in synagogue and in market place, to Jews and proselytes and to Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, he preached Jesus and the resurrection. The Athenians took delight in hearing something new, and they brought Paul unto the Areopagus and had him explain his new teaching.

Lesson IV. Standing in the midst of the Areopagus Paul addressed the throng. He referred to an inscription that he had seen on one of their altars—To an Unknown God—and said that the One whom they worshipped in ignorance he declared unto them. God who made the world and all things does not dwell in temples, nor does He need anything, for He Himself is the source of life and all things. He made all nations brothers, he would have them all seek and find Him, but He is not far from every one, for in Him each one lives. Being God's children, we ought not to think that our Father is like any image made by man. Their ignorance God had overlooked in the past, but now He called them to change their views, for there will come a day when He will judge the world by the One whom He had appointed, whom He had raised from the dead. At the reference to the resurrection some of Paul's hearers mocked; others said that they would hear him again, and thus he was dismissed. Among those who believed was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris.

Lesson V. Paul went on to Corinth and there made his home with Aquila and Priscilla and worked at their common trade of tent-making. He preached in the synagogue on the Sabbaths. Silas and Timothy joined him, and encouraged by their presence he preached more zealously to the Jews. The Jews opposed him so that he turned from them to the Gentiles, and preached to them in the house of Titus Justus, near the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and many Corinthians believed and were baptized. By a vision at night he was encouraged, and he labored at Corinth eighteen months.

Lesson VI. While at Corinth Paul wrote his letters to the Thessalonians, and from the first one we studied his exhortations to highly esteem those that labored among them, to live peacefully together, to admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, and support the weak, to be long suffering toward all, not rendering evil for evil, but good to all, to rejoice always, to pray and give thanks, not to quench the Spirit nor despise prophecyings, to prove all things and hold fast that which is good, to abstain from every form of evil.

At Corinth the Jews became so hostile to Paul that they brought him before Gallio, the proconsul, and charged him with persuading men to worship contrary to the law, but Gallio would not hear them. After awhile Paul left on his return journey to Antioch, stopping at Ephesus on the way. He landed at Cæsarea and went to Jerusalem and then to Antioch. After some little time at Antioch he started forth on his third missionary journey, going through the region of Galatia and Phrygia and on to Ephesus. Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, had taught at Ephesus, and after receiving instruction from Aquila and Priscilla had gone on to Corinth before Paul arrived. Paul found that the disciples at Ephesus were "John the Baptist's disciples," and he had them baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Lesson VII. Paul preached in the synagogue of the Jews at Ephesus for three months, and then, owing to Jewish hostility, turned to the Gentiles. He spent two years teaching at the school of Tyrannus, and multitudes throughout the province of Asia came to hear him. Miracles wrought through him increased the belief in the truth of his message. The sacredness of Jesus Christ's name was impressed on the people by an attempt of certain exorcists to cure a demon-possessed by naming over him the name of "Jesus whom Paul preacheth." Crying out that he knew Jesus and Paul, but not them, the demon-possessed attacked the exorcists so violently that they escaped with difficulty. Many of the believers confessed their evil deeds and many of the magicians publicly burned their scrolls which were of great money value.

It was Paul's purpose, Luke tells us, to return to Macedonia and

Achaia on his way to Jerusalem, and then go to Rome. While he stayed on awhile longer in Ephesus, he sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia.

Lesson VIII. Demetrius, a silversmith of Ephesus, occasioned a riot by calling a meeting of the craftsmen of the city who made shrines of Diana and warning them that their business might have to be given up because Paul was teaching the people that images were not gods. The very worship of Diana was threatened, he added. The crowds in the city took up their shout of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." On to the theatre, was the cry, and seizing Gaius and Aristarchus, companions of Paul, they rushed to that place of meeting. Though the greater part did not know what the tumult was about, for two hours they shouted themselves hoarse with their cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The town clerk at last quieted them. In a tactful speech he assured them that a few strangers could not affect the unquestionable fact that Ephesus was the guardian of the great Diana, told them Gaius and Aristarchus could be charged with no crime, that Demetrius and the craftsmen should bring their matter, if they had any, before the proconsul, and warned them that they might be called to account for this inexcusable riot. He then dismissed them, and the uproar was over.

Lesson IX. From Ephesus Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and his beautiful words in that letter about Christian love are the theme of this lesson. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, said Paul, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not it own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Paul left Ephesus and spent several months in Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. During this time his Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written. He went on to Corinth where he wrote his Epistle to the Romans. He had purposed sailing directly from there to Syria with the money he had collected for the Church at Jerusalem, but a plot against him led him to return by way of Macedonia. He tarried at Philippi and at Troas. At the latter place he restored Tychichus to life. He went on by land to Assos, and there embarked on a coasting vessel.

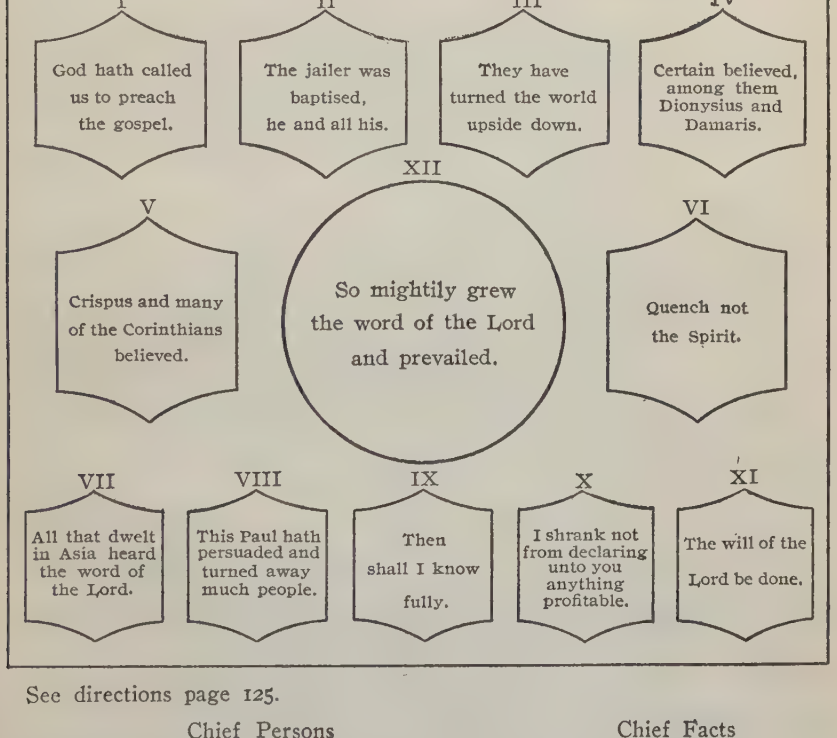
Lesson X. Paul's vessel stopped at Miletus, and a message was sent to the elders of the Church at Ephesus to meet Paul there. In his farewell words he summed up his work while with them, reminding them how he had faithfully served the Lord in spite of the plots of the Jews, and how he had taught them all things profitable for them to know. He was on his way to Jerusalem; he felt impelled to go, though he knew that bonds and afflictions awaited him, but he held not his life as dear unto himself, his only wish being to fulfill his mission. They would not see him again, and he wished them to bear witness that he had faithfully warned and taught them. He urged them to be faithful in their care of the Church, and to be on their guard against false teachers. Then he commended them to the care of God, and exhorted them to follow his example in not coveting wealth, in helping the weak, in remembering Christ's words that it is more blessed to give than to receive. After kneeling with Paul in prayer the elders sorrowfully embraced him and escorted him to his ship.

Lesson XI. Paul sailed around to Patara, and there he embarked in a

ship bound directly across to Phœnicia. At Tyre the ship left its freight, and this gave Paul an opportunity to seek out the brethren there. They urged him not to go to Jerusalem, but not being able to dissuade him they all accompanied him to the beach and bade him farewell. After a day at Ptolemais, where the voyage was finished, Paul and his company went on to Cæsarea and abode with Philip. Agabus foretold Paul's captivity, and all urgently besought him not to go to Jerusalem, but Paul only reproved them for breaking his heart. He was ready, he declared, not only to be bound but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus; then said they, the will of the Lord be done. The journey was continued, and at Jerusalem the brethren received them gladly.

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

(A sentence from each lesson referring to the thought of the Golden Text for the Quarter.)


I
God hath called us to preach the gospel.
II
The jailer was baptised, he and all his.
III
They have turned the world upside down.
IV
Certain believed, among them Dionysius and Damaris.
XII
So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.
V
Crispus and many of the Corinthians believed.
VI
Quench not the Spirit.
VII
All that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord.
VIII
This Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people.
IX
Then shall I know fully.
X
I shrank not from declaring unto you anything profitable.
XI
The will of the Lord be done.

See directions page 125.

	Chief Persons	Chief Facts
I.	Paul and Lydia	A great Need
II.	Paul and the Jailor	A great Question
III.	Paul and the Jews	A great Jealousy
IV.	Paul and the Athenians.	A great Speech
V.	Paul and the Corinthians	A great Resolve
VI.	Paul and the Thessalonians	A great Instruction
VII.	Paul and the Ephesians	A great Bon-fire
VIII.	Paul and Demetrius	A great Riot
IX.	Paul and the Corinthians	The greatest Thing
X.	Paul and the Ephesian Elders	A great Farewell
XI.	Paul and his Discouragers	A great Steadfastness

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Practical Lesson Truths

See directions, page 125.

I. The call to service comes to each one.
II. The jailor's question must be answered by every one.
III. Let us receive the word with readiness of mind and search the scriptures daily.
IV. God is not far from each one of us.
V. Only those who do what they can for the furthering of the gospel are able to say with Paul that they are free from responsibility in the matter.
VI. Abstain from every form of evil.
VII. Sinful practices must be abandoned and temptations thereto put away.
VIII. We should judge questions by their own merits, not by their effect on our own interests.
IX. Love should be the guiding principle of our lives.
X. Our lives are not given to us for our own sakes.
XI. Let us not be discouragers.

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

These questions may be copied and given the pupils the Sunday before Review Day, to be answered at home in writing and the answers read and discussed in class on Review Sunday, or part of the questions may be answered orally or in writing during the class period.

I. What led Paul to go from Asia Minor over to Macedonia? In what city did he talk to a company of women by the riverside? What woman was baptized?

II. Why were Paul and Silas imprisoned? How were they freed?

III. Why did some of the people at Thessalonica hate Paul? What did they say he had done? Why did they seize Jason? Where then did Paul go? What good word is said about the people in that place?

IV. What did Paul say about the Athenians? What did he tell them about God? What did he urge them to do? What did some of them say?

V. What was Paul's trade? In what city did he turn from the Jews to the Gentiles? Why? What words of encouragement did he hear in a vision?

VI. What are some of the things against which Paul warned the Thessalonians in a letter? What are some of the things which he urged them to do?

VII. How long did Paul stay at Ephesus? What did he first do there? What was the cause of a fight? What was the cause of a bonfire?

VIII. What did Demetrius say would be the result of Paul's preaching? What did the people shout? How were they quieted?

IX. What did Paul say were the things which last? What is the greatest? What does it fail to do? What does it do?

X. What are some of the things that Paul told the Ephesian Elders? What words of Jesus did he repeat?

XI. When the ship on which Paul was returning stopped at Tyre what did he do? What did the Church do? How did Agabus tell Paul that he should be bound in Jerusalem? What was Paul's answer?

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. What part of Paul's life is covered by the lessons of this period? 2. Name three persons associated with him during these years. 3. What cities did he visit on his second journey? 4. On his third journey? 5. Why did Paul select the chief cities for his churches? 6. From whom came Paul's persecutions during this time? 7. What were the results of his labors in Philippi? 8. Thessalonica? 9. Berea? 10. Athens? 11. Corinth? 12. Ephesus? 13. Why did Paul write to the Thessalonians? From what city were his letters written? 14. Why did he write to the Corinthians? From what city? 15. What other letters did Paul write during this period? (Galatians and Romans).

A WORD PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

I. It is midnight in a city by the seashore. A man is looking at a dim figure

that seems to beckon to him with one hand as it points out across the waters with the other. Now the scene has changed to the banks of a river, where a man is talking earnestly to a group of women.

II. In a prison two men are singing. Now there is great excitement, something very strange is happening. We are now looking on the prison court where people are being baptized. And now the two men are quietly walking away.

III. Here there is a mob of people shouting and running about. Some of them are dragging a man along with them. The next scene is a peaceful one. A company of men are going on a journey.

IV. We are standing on a hill; in every direction we can see beautiful buildings and statues. We are in the midst of a large company of people all of whom are listening to a speaker.

V. What a busy scene this is! Every one is weaving or sewing. One of those workers is now preaching to a large number of people.

VI. Here we are reading a letter that is full of good advice and helpful warning.

VII. There is great excitement here, for what looks like a fight is going on. In the same place a crowd has now collected around a bonfire.

VIII. Such an excited crowd of people there is on the streets here, each one running madly about and shouting himself hoarse! Now they are in a great open building and still shouting. A man has made them stop and listen to him, and now they are all quietly going away.

IX. Again we are reading a letter, a beautiful, helpful letter.

X. A very earnest speaker is talking to a company of men. Now all are kneeling in prayer and now they are bidding him goodbye.

XI. We are on a sea voyage. The ship has stopped at a harbor, and on the shore are a group of people, women and children as well as men, who are praying and then are telling some of the ship's passengers good-bye. The ship has reached the end of its voyage. Some of its passengers are in a house, and a man is tying together the feet of another with a long sash. Now the journey is being continued on foot.

ESSAY WORK FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. Paul's Second Missionary Journey. Acts 15.36-18.22. Draw or purchase an outline map and trace on it this journey. Put the map at the head of your essay.
2. Paul's Third Missionary Journey. Acts 18.23-21.17. Trace also the journey on a map.
3. Paul the Preacher.
4. Paul the Letter-writer.
5. The Epistles to the Thessalonians.
6. The Epistles to the Corinthians.
7. A paraphrase of Lesson VI.
8. A paraphrase of Lesson IX.
9. For each lesson write a truth learned, and a sentence sermon, a Bible verse, and a thought of your own in regard to that truth.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Review the first lesson of the second quarter. 2. What question had the Corinthian Church evidently asked Paul? 3. What direction had the Council at Jerusalem given in regard to meat offered to idols? (Lesson 8, 2d quarter.) 4. How do you explain Paul's attitude now? 5. What verse of our last temperance lesson is especially applicable to the main thought of this lesson? (10.) 6. What does *shambles* mean? (See dictionary.) 7. Explain the force of the questions in vv. 29 and 30. 8. What does it mean to "do all to the glory of God"? 9. What bearing has the whole discourse on present-day problems? 10. What did Paul say in 1 Cor. 8.13 about his willingness to give up anything that might cause another to stumble? 11. What kind of conscience did he say he always strove to have, Acts 24.16? 12. What are your rights? 13. Are your rights as a Christian different from what they would be if you were not a Christian? 14. Give several reasons for never using spiritous liquors.

TEMPERANCE LESSON

Read 1 Corinthians 10.23-33. Commit verse 24.

Golden Text

Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. Rom. 15.2.

LESSON TEXT 1 Cor. 10.23-33

23 All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify. 24 Let no man seek his own, but *each* his neighbor's *good.* 25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake; 26 for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. 27 If one of them that believe not biddeth you *to a feast,* and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28 But if any man say unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake: 29 conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that which I give thanks? 31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: 33 even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of the many, that they may be saved.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

23. *All things.* 1 Cor. 6.12. Paul is discussing especially the eating of food sacrificed to idols, 1 Cor. 8.1-11.1.—*Lawful.* Allowable, permissible.—*Expedient.* Morally desirable, advisable, profitable.—*Edify.* Margin, Greek, *build up.* "To instruct and improve, especially in moral and religious knowledge." (*Webster*).

24. *His own. Good* is to be supplied.—*His neighbor's good.* Our word *wealth,* used in the A. V., comes from the Old English *wele* (*weal*), and meant originally *welfare.*

25. *The shambles.* Tables or stalls in the public market place, or the slaughter-house itself.—*Eat.* See Acts 10.15.—*Asking no questions for conscience' sake.* Do not make it a matter of conscience to find out whether the meat has been offered to idols. See 1 Cor. 8.7. "Refrain from questions so as not to disturb your conscience by associating the meat with sacrifice. The case seems to be supposed of a man whose judgment is convinced, but who can not quite get rid of old associations" (*Drummond*).

26. A quotation from Psa. 24.1.—*The fulness thereof.* That with which the earth is filled. Since everything belongs to God, meat consecrated to an idol is His also.

27. *Whatsoever is set before you, eat.* See Luke 10.8.

28. *For his sake that showed it.* This one has conscientious scruples about eating such meat, and, although you rightly think such meat may be eaten, abstain from eating lest the other's conscience may be troubled by your eating or the other may even be led to follow your example and eat in disobedience to his conscience. See 1 Cor. 8.10-12.—*For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof,* A. V., is omitted as an interpolation, repeated from verse 26.

29. *For why.* For what good purpose.—*For why is my liberty judged by an-*

other conscience. What do I gain by eating when my liberty will be censured by another? Such assertion of liberty is not worth while. Let not your good be evil spoken of, Rom. 14.16.—*My liberty.* As in our former lesson from 1 Corinthians (13.1-3), Paul uses in this supposition the first person. Here he supposes himself doing that against which he has counselled, in saying "eat not," verse 28.

30. An argument similar to the question in verse 29. My conscience in eating is clear and therefore I can give thanks for the food, but why eat and thus allow myself to be evil spoken of? The other man's scruples are of more account than my liberty in eating.

31. *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* Col. 3.17; Matt. 5.16.

32. *Give no occasion of stumbling.* 1 Cor. 8.13.—*Jews, Greeks, or the Church of God.* Jews, Gentiles, Christians.

33. *I also please all men in all things.* 1 Cor. 9.19-22.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

23. *Not all things edify.* That which educates me makes *me* more—able to *be* more, to *enjoy* more, to *count* more. *H. C. King.*

25. *Whatever is sold in the shambles, eat.* Notice that Paul disregards utterly the apostolic decree of Acts 15.23, which he himself apparently assented to, and in his second missionary journey (which first brought him to Corinth) distributed to the churches, and which enjoined abstinence from idol sacrifices as one of the "necessary things." For even the advice of 10.28 referred, not to his readers' conscience, but to one of the weak brothers who gave the information. This disregard can not be accounted for by a change of circumstances, making expedient a change of practice in so short a time. It rather points to an advance of knowledge in the mind of the apostle, to a firmer grasp of the teaching of Christ (*e. g.* Mark 7.18). This does not lessen the authority of the apostles as unanimous witnesses of the teaching of Christ. But it warns us to be careful in accepting, as binding for all time, the letter of their advice in matters of small detail. *J. Agar Beet, in Commentary on First Corinthians.*

32. *Give no occasion of stumbling.* There are two kinds of "weaker brethren"; not only those for whom eating flesh is sin and whom you stumble by eating, but also those for whom it is no sin, and whom you stumble by making it a sin. Between the two classes one has always to guide his course; both are to be regarded; both lay duties upon us. And the duty of developing a proper conscience in another may often be as imperative as the duty of removing all possible temptation from his path. *Henry Churchill King, in Rational Living.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *All things are lawful.* The Jews had many scruples about what they ate and about the company with whom they ate. They were accustomed to inquire whether the fruit and herbs on the table had been tithed according to custom, whether the meat had been offered to idols, whether the animal had been torn by wild beasts, or strangled, or not killed in the prescribed manner. Paul had been in his early life one of the most strict in keeping the ceremonial laws, but after he "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" he looked at such laws differently.

26. *The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.* This was the common form of Jewish thanksgiving before a meal, and hence was probably the early Eucharistic blessing. *Dean Stanley.*

27. *If one of them that believe not biddeth you to a feast.* On the occasion of a birthday, or a marriage, or a safe return from sea, or any circumstance that seemed to call for celebration, it was customary to sacrifice in some public temple. And after the legs and the entrails of the victim had been burnt on the altar, the worshipper received the remainder and invited his friends and guests to partake of it, either in the temple itself, or in the surrounding grove or at his own home. *Marcus Dods.*

28. *This hath been offered in sacrifice.* The law in regard to meat given the

Israelites during their life in the wilderness was this: What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it without the camp, and hath not brought it unto the door of the tent of meeting, to offer it as an oblation unto Jehovah before the tabernacle of Jehovah...that man shall be cut off from among his people. Just as that meat was first presented as a sacrifice to Jehovah, so the heathen were wont to present their animals slain for food as a sacrifice to their idols. The blood was poured out as a libation to their gods, and then the meat was sold in the market. Every meal, in fact, was "in a manner dedicated to the household gods by laying some portion of it on the family altar."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For the place and date and occasion of writing this First Epistle to the Corinthians, see page 22 of this Guide. The church at Corinth was only a few years old, its members were most of them Gentiles who had worshipped idols before they adopted Christianity, they were surrounded by idol worshippers, and many puzzling questions arose as to what it was right for them as Christians to do. Delegates from the church had been sent to Paul at Ephesus with questions on which they wished his advice. One burning question was what should they do in regard to eating meat that had first been offered to idols. Some of them held that they could eat it; others that they could not, for by eating it they would be taking part in idolatrous worship. The council at Jerusalem (lesson VIII of second quarter) when it freed the Gentile converts from the necessity of accepting the Jewish rite of circumcision had declared that they must abstain from meat offered to idols. Chapters 8-10 of this Epistle give Paul's answer to the vexed question. In the preceding verses he counselled them not to sanction idolatry by their presence at idolatrous feasts, they must "flee from idolatry." In the verses of our lesson he gives his counsel in regard to the eating at a private feast of meat offered to idols.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Is it wrong for a little girl to play with a doll? Can you think of any time when it might be wrong for her to play with it? If several other girls come to see her, and she has only one doll, would it be right for her to keep the doll to herself and pay no attention to her friends? A lady who lives in Palestine has shown that it may be wrong for some girls ever to play with dolls, strange as this may seem. In heathen countries the people worship idols, you know, and the missionaries tell them that this is wrong. The heathen see the daughters of a missionary playing with their dolls, and they think that the dolls are idols, such as they worship in their own homes. They say the missionary tells them not to worship idols, and yet he lets his own daughters worship them, and they do not want to have anything more to do with a man like that. Should not these girls give up their dolls for the sake of the people whom their father is trying to teach? Should not the girl at home care more for the pleasure of her friends who come to see her than for her own pleasure, and should not the girls in heathen lands care more for the good of the people there than for their dolls? This is the truth that Paul teaches the people of Corinth in his letter to them, that some things which are not wrong become wrong when they are misunderstood by others, or when they lead others to do what they think is wrong.

For Older Pupils. How many letters of Paul are there in the New Testament? How many general letters? How many lessons have we had from the latter? From the former? What two letters were the first written? From what city were they written? What were the subjects of the lesson we had seven weeks ago from First Thessalonians? What was the subject of the lesson we had from First Corinthians four weeks ago? What is the subject of our lesson to-day from this same letter? From what city was this letter written? What led Paul to write it? When did he write another letter to this Church? (See page 22, and the Historical Background of this lesson.)

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Our Rights

True Liberty. It is easy enough to make out the argument for those Corinthian Christians who believed with Paul that there was nothing wrong in itself in eating meat that had been offered to idols. "My conscience is clear," such a one might say, "I know I am doing nothing wrong. If another man thinks it unlawful to eat such meat let him abstain. Why should my rights be interfered with? It is my own personal affair whether I eat or don't eat." Have you not heard similar arguments in regard to the right of drinking intoxicating liquor? What does Paul say? He does not deny their "rights," but he would have them enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God who are free to do what is right others considered, in contrast with that liberty where he is free to do what is right himself alone considered. True liberty always involves restraint.

I am Debtor. "Our rights" is the plea of the liquor traffic as it goes on with its work of death; of capitalism as it crushes small dealers under its merciless wheels; of the labor organization as it closes the door of opportunity against the non-union man and cruelly drives him and his family to starvation. "Our rights" is the slogan of all wars, the plea of all grinding competitions, the cry of all unholy rivalries and conflicts among men. Behind it people excuse their crimes and their indifference. They say, "Haven't we a right to go to church or stay at home? Haven't we a right to vote or refrain from voting, to drink or abstain, to turn the Sabbath into a day of pleasuring or of piety, to endorse or condemn, to sell or not to sell just as we please?" That is the spirit that causes all our trouble. It stands at the opposite pole from all that is taught in the Word of God. The word *rights* is nowhere to be found in the Bible. The doctrine that goes booming through the Holy Scriptures, the doctrine that develops the heroes and reformers of the inspired book, the doctrine that binds all noble hearts and lives to the life of Christ, is the sublime doctrine of human duties. "I am debtor" is the verbal form it takes. It looks out and not in, away from the egoistic to the altruistic, and considers what it can do for others. "I am debtor." *Robert F. Coyle,* in *The Church and the Times.*

The Try-Square. Most religions are meant to be straight lines, connecting two points—God and man. If man can be right with God, if he can please and pacify Him, all will be well. But Christianity has three points—God and man and his brother, with two lines that make a right angle. Each one of us is at the point of an angle, looking up to God and out to his brother. What God sends down the perpendicular line we must pass on along the horizontal. If one hand goes up to God, the other must go out to our brother. If I am tempted, I must look both ways, and consider my brother as well as my God. If I only looked to God, I might spend more money on myself, and drink wine, for in themselves these things may not be sinful; but when I look at my brothers, some poor, some weak, some worldly, I hesitate. The law of liberty would let me as I look up, but not the law of love as I look out. Let us put this try-square on our lives, and look both ways, doing that only which is both filial and fraternal. *M. D. Babcock,* in *Thoughts for Every-day Living.*

Dr. Babcock's Own Use of His Rights. Dr. Babcock always tried his "try-square" on his own rights, and avoided everything that could have a wrong influence over his fellowmen. When urged to smoke, he said: "You must excuse me. You know my work is more to me than anything else. A minister's profession is peculiar. It must be guarded very carefully. I am liable to be called out at any time of night or day, in the service of my profession, and if I were called suddenly to the bedside of some one who was dying, it wouldn't seem just right, would it, if I had the odor of tobacco on my clothes and on my breath. It might be offensive or trying to the sick one." When offered the use of a box at the opera through the season, he replied: "I can't thank you enough for the kindness you are showing me. But you know how a surgeon, in practicing his profession, is not only obliged to keep his hands and linen free from dirt, but he must keep himself aseptically clean as well. Now, in my profession, I have to be even more careful than a surgeon, and

so I must be careful about things that might do harm in even the most indirect way."

The Right to play Cards for Prizes. A man who had carried on a saloon and gambling room for a number of years spoke at a mass meeting in Portsmouth, Ohio, about the way gamblers are made, as quoted by S. B. Alderson: "Where do all the gamblers come from? They are not taught in the gambling dens. A 'greenie' never enters one because he knows that he will be fleeced out of everything he possesses in less than fifteen minutes. He has learned somewhere else before he sets foot inside of such a place. When he has played in the parlor, and has become proficient enough to win prizes among his friends, the next step with him is to seek out the gambling rooms, for he has learned, and now counts on his ability to hold his own...I say, then, the parlor prize game is the college where gamblers are made and educated. For my part, I never could see the difference between playing for a piece of silver molded in the shape of money and silver molded in the shape of a cup or a thimble. The principle is the same, and wherever property changes hands over the luck of the cards, no matter how small is the value of the prize, I believe it to be gambling."

Of course, not every one who plays cards for prizes is going to become a gambler, any more than every one who drinks a glass of wine is going to become a drunkard. There are multitudes of people to whom gambling and drinking are no temptation, but who can be sure until he tries it whether or not he is proof against these allurements? Who can know when he gives a prize to a friend or offers a glass of wine to another, that he is not helping to awaken in that friend a desire which will be to him a torment? Is it not better "neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth"?

II For Conscience' Sake

Conscience must be obeyed. He whose conscience tells him that a certain course of conduct is wrong, and yet follows that course in spite of his conscience, does himself a great wrong, for he obscures his judgment in other questions and weakens his moral will. A conscience often trifled with will become hardened and will cease to warn. If the conscience of a Corinthian Christian tells him that it is wrong to eat meat that has been offered to idols, for him it is wrong, whatever others may say on the subject. If the conscience of a Friend tells him that war is wrong, for him to fight is wrong, however he may sympathize at heart with the cause for which his country is fighting. He whose conscience forbids his riding to church on Sunday in a street car should not ride, and he whose conscience condemns billiards should not play billiards. He that doubteth is condemned if he eat, says Paul, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Paul is very clear in this teaching; and the experience of every one proves its truth. "The morality af the act depends on the spirit of the one who does the act," and he who acts contrary to the command of conscience, consciously commits sin even though what he does is not sinful in itself. Conscience, the judge divine in each human heart, must be obeyed.

Conscience must be educated. Paul once acted conscientiously in persecuting the Christians; Jefferson once solemnly declared that "slavery was established by the decree of Almighty God." A century and a half ago colleges and churches were built in part from the proceeds of lotteries held to raise the money. Probably every one who earnestly endeavors to lead a true life, awakens with a start at times to a realization of the fact that he has hitherto been blind to some duty which his conscience now tells him should have been done long ago. It is not enough for us to do as well as we know how; we ought to do better than we now know how, for it is our duty to learn better. "If I walk 'cordin' to the light I have, that's all that's 'spected of me, I s'pose," remarks a colored brother in a recent story, but his philosopher friend argues differently: "Don't be too sure on that subject. If we sit still in a dim place, when lights are outside, we're 'sponsible for not seein' well, I reckon."

An often Unrecognized Duty. If, for example, I had somehow gained the impression that two times fifteen are thirty-five and at the impulse of that

impression carried that unique system of multiplication into all my mathematical calculations and into my financial operations, the fact that such was my honest impression would not undo the erroneousness of my figuring, would not intellectually acquit me, and would not exonerate me from the charge of what might be called mental immorality, that is to say, especially if I was a person endowed with ordinary powers of mind, and furnished with ordinary opportunities of mental training. In all such matters we study in order that we may get at the facts. Now it is strange that when we move into a sphere of morals and religion, so many of us are ready to take the first impression that comes to us as authoritative, and because, for reasons which we can not explain and which very likely are no reasons, but merely whims and capriciousness, we suppose a certain course of conduct to be right, we assume it to be right, and credit ourselves with acting righteously and doing the will of God because we are "acting conscientiously" and "doing as well as we know how." *Charles H. Parkhurst,* in *The Bible Record.*

The Trained Conscience. All training of the conscience proceeds in the direction of the scruple. In moral and spiritual culture the line of progress is not from the less to the greater, but from the greater to the less. A man can measure the increasing refinement of his conscience by its more pervasive activity in the trifle. The path of perfection leads toward a faithfulness in that which is least. *J. H. Jowett.*

III. Principles, not Rules

Christ's Teaching. Christ never taught that one could draw a dividing line and put on one side all that is wrong and on the other all that is right. The Mohammedans attempted to do this. On the basis of Mohammed's teachings they drew up a code of laws numbering seventy-five thousand, and yet cases soon arose that were not covered by the letter of any law. There is no definite line drawn across the continent of North America to separate the United States and Canada, but wherever the direction of the boundary line changes, posts are erected. Such landmarks Jesus Christ gave in the general principles He laid down for right conduct. "In the Sermon on the Mount, as also in His parabolic teaching, He laid down certain specimen principles, laws of the kingdom of heaven, but never did He pretend to offer to men an ethical system in which they might expect to find all moral difficulties codified and ticketed with their appropriate fines and punishments. He knew that to do so would be to deny the laws of true life, to deny the deepest want of human nature, which needs effort and discipline, and choice and failure, in order that it may grow and flourish. He laid down, therefore, broad principles of righteousness and truth, and love and helpfulness, and He left His followers to work out the details for themselves." The many laws were expressed in ten commandments and then reduced to two, love of God, and love of one's neighbor, and then Christ compressed the two into one—This is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you. Love of God is expressed in love of one another, and love of one another is expressed in service.

Paul's Teaching. Paul taught the same lesson that Christ had taught, that we are to be governed by broad general principles of conduct, not by multitudinous rules. Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good, is the broad principle he lays down to govern one's acts in relation to others. If one were wholly unselfish, if he made his neighbor's good his real aim and not his own, he would not eat meat offered to idols when by doing so he might cause others to violate their consciences and eat also, he would not drink moderately intoxicating liquor lest others be led by his example to drink excessively, he would break none of the ten commandments, he would keep the commandment of Christ. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God, is Paul's summing up of his counsels. He who seeks not his own but his neighbor's good does do all to the glory of God, he seeks God's honor in all the actions of his life, however trivial, exalts Him in the eyes of men by revealing in his own character the character of God.

How can one eat so that God may be honored? By eating justly, temperately and thankfully, said Epictetus; by not offending others, by not caus-

ing others to offend, added Paul. This is the test by which doubtful practices are to be tried—does the doing help or hinder one's spiritual life, does it help or hinder one's neighbor? Love God, and do what you like, said St. Augustine. He who truly loves God will like to do all to the glory of God.

Love the Fulfilling of the Law. "I have heard a child say, 'I am tired of being good.' I do not wonder at such a speech. Everything committed to memory by rule is essentially tiresome. Goodness is no exception. If I have to count every morning how many kind things I shall do for my brother during the day, I shall be very weary ere the day is done. But when there comes to me that one thing called love, I cease to be careful and troubled about the many things. Love gives me the instinct of the bee. It becomes my immediate monitor. It abolishes rules."

In these words Dr. George Matheson shows that the one who seeks not his own but his neighbor's good will have no need for rules of conduct. Right living will become so natural to him that he will no more think what rules of conduct he is following than did the poet Tennyson what rules of poetry he observed. A friend of Tennyson's set himself to find out the rules of his versification and collected from his poems an immense number of laws and examples, Ruskin tells us. "Look here," then said the friend to the poet, "what wonderful laws you observe!" "It is true," Tennyson replied after glancing over his friend's work; "I do observe all these laws, but I never knew it."

SENTENCE SERMONS

To obey God is liberty. *Seneca.*

If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on. *Whittier.*

The best thing about rights is that they are our own and we can give them up. *George Macdonald.*

There is no virtue in doing right in such a way as to lead others to do wrong. *Henry F. Cope.*

No man in this world has a right to all his rights. *Phillips Brooks.*

A peace above all dignities,
A still and quiet conscience. *Shakespeare.*

I am certain that the good of life can not lie in the possession of things which for one man to possess is for the rest to lose, but rather in things which all can possess alike, and where one man's wealth promotes his neighbor's. *Spinoza.*

Rules are good, but principles are better; rules may contradict, confuse; principles are constant, consistent. *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

The true calling of the Christian is not to do extraordinary things, but to do things in an extraordinary way. *Arthur P. Stanley.*

Conscience not nourished by daily Bible reading and strengthened by continual reference to the highest standards, is not enough of a conscience to be trusted by its lazy possessor. *Forward.*

When we do nothing, we must do nothing in the name of the Lord. *George Macdonald.*

Conscience is a safe guide only when God is Guide of the conscience. *George D. Herron.*

Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble. 1 Cor. 8.13.

Use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. Gal. 5.13.

Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. Rom. 14.22.

We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. Rom. 15.1, 2.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

When conscience tells you that any course of conduct is not wrong in itself,

that is not the end of the question. Your conscience has yet other questions to settle. What will be the influence on others if you follow that course? You are your neighbor's keeper whether you will or not. Can your neighbor do without violating his conscience what you can do without violating yours? Can he do with safety to himself what you can do with safety to yourself?

Try to have a good time in the world, counsels Dr. Edward Eggleston. Get your pleasures always at your own and not at other people's expense. Let it always be good, honest, clean happiness with nothing wrong about it.

Not all things are expedient; not all things edify. Do all to the glory of God. We are in the world to be good and to be good for something, to have a good time when it does not interfere with, but rather helps, the "be good" and "do good," says Dr. Babcock. What is there that you care for which is really not worth while, measured by this standard?

Do unto others as you would that men should do unto you.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

May we eat meat that has been offered to idols? the Corinthians asked Paul. Not all things that are lawful are advisable, not all lawful things are helpful, Paul answers. Be governed by this principle of conduct; in all things seek your neighbor's good, not your own. As for your particular question, all things belong to God and therefore it is lawful to eat all meat sold in the market without troubling yourself with the possibility of its having been offered to idols. At a private feast eat what is set before you with a conscience free from all scruples. If, however, some one at the feast tells you that the meat has been offered to idols, then refrain from eating it for the sake of that other's conscience. For him whose conscience tells him it is wrong to eat such meat it will be wrong, and the one who has no conscientious scruples must have regard for the conscientious scruples of another. Why should I exercise my liberty of eating when by so doing I bring it under the condemnation of others? Why should I allow myself to be evil spoken of because of eating things that I knew I could rightfully partake of with thanks? There is little to be gained by my exercising my rights, and much to be lost. All questions of Christian liberty—whether of eating or drinking or of anything else—must be settled by this principle. Does it contribute to the glory of God, does it give offence to others? Paul believed in reinforcing his words by his example, and since his aim had always been not to please himself but to seek the good of others, he could rightfully add, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1 When is the use of wine unlawful? Dean Farrar says: When it inflicts injury on others, on the drinker, is a temptation to excess, a source of temptation to others, or an impediment to perfection.

2. What is the responsibility of share-holders of brewery stock for the crimes committed by drunkards? Of the traders who taught the Chinese to smoke opium?

3. Is it possible now to do all things to the glory of God?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What did we last hear about the Church at Jerusalem? (Lesson VIII, second quarter.) 2. What did Paul tell the elders on this, his last visit to the city? (vv. 18, 19.) 3. Why were the Judean Christians hostile to Paul? (vv. 20, 21.) 4. By what plan did the elders propose to overcome their hostility? (vv. 22-24.) 5. What opposition had Paul met in the synagogue at Ephesus from "Jews from Asia"? (Acts 19.8, 9.) 6. When before had Paul witnessed riots? (Lessons II, III, and VIII of this quarter.) 7. When had another Jerusalem mob shouted "Away with him"? (John 19.15.) 8. In what lesson of this year did we see a mob at Jerusalem bent on the death of its victim? (Lesson VIII, 1st quarter.) 9. What had been Paul's part in that mob? (Acts 22.20.) 10. Give Paul's defence in your own words. (Acts 22.1-21. 11. What words infuriated the mob? (Verse 21.) 12. What befell Paul? (22-30.)

FOURTH QUARTER

LESSON I—OCTOBER 3

PAUL A PRISONER—THE ARREST

Read Acts 21.17-22.29. Commit verse 21.39.

Golden Text

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. II Tim. 2.3.

LESSON TEXT Acts 21.27-39

27 And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. 29 For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. 31 And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 32 And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul. 33 Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. 34 And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. 35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; 36 for the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was abut to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? 38 Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins? 39 But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

27. *When the seven days were almost completed.* This evidently has reference to the purification in the temple, verse 26, but what seven days are meant is doubtful.

28. *This is the man that teacheth.* Compare verse 21, and the accusation made against Jesus, Mark 14.58 and that against Stephen, Acts 6.13.—*He brought Greeks also into the temple.* By *the temple* here is meant the inner court, or the Court of the Israelites, into which no Gentile might enter.

29. *Trophimus the Ephesian.* See Acts 20.4.

30. *Straightway the doors were shut. The doors* were the gates between the Court of the Israelites and the Court of the Gentiles; they were shut by the temple guard to keep out the mob.

31. *The chief captain.* R. V. M., *the military tribune.* Greek, chiliarch. Claudius Lysias, Acts 23.26.—*Band.* R. V. M., *cohort.*

32. *And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them.*

PAUL DELIVERED FROM THE JERUSALEM MOB

A centurion was a commander of a century, consisting of fifty to one hundred men. They *ran down* from the Tower of Antonia.

33. *Bound with two chains.* Like Peter, 12.6, to a soldier on either side.

34. *And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd.* Compare the scene at Ephesus, 19.32.—*Castle.* Literally, *barracks,* the tower where the soldiers were quartered.

35. *The stairs.* They led from the temple court to the tower.—*So it was.* It happened, because of the frenzied crowd.

36. *Crying out, Away with him.* Compare John 19.15.

37. *Dost thou know Greek?* The chief captain asked the question in surprise at hearing his prisoner speak in cultured Greek.

38. *Art thou not then the Egyptian? The Egyptian* is twice mentioned by Josephus: in his "Jewish War" he says he had thirty thousand followers; and led a rabble out of Jerusalem, promising to show them that the walls would fall down at his command. A large portion of them were killed or captured by the Procurator Felix; in his "Antiquities" he says fourteen thousand were slain. —*The Assassins.* They were the *Sicarii,* "men of the dagger," members of a secret society.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

27. *Stirred up all the multitude.* The Jews at this period were in a most inflamable state of mind. The procuratorship of Cumanus marked the commencement of terrible disturbances. At the very first Passover at which he was present an event occurred which was a terrible omen of the future. Just as at this day the Turkish soldiers are always prepared to pour down from the house of the Turkish Government on the first occurrence of any discord between the Greek and Latin Churches, so it was the custom of the Roman commandment of the Tower of Antonia to post detachments of soldiers along the roof of the cloister which connected the fortress with the temple area—ready at any moment to rush down the stairs and plunge into the very midst of the crowded worshippers. What occurred on this occasion was singularly characteristic. While standing there at guard, one of the Roman soldiers, weary of having nothing to do, and disgusted with watching what he despised as the mummeries of these hateful Jews, expressed his contempt for them by a gesture of insult. Instantly the Jews were plunged into a paroxism of fury. They cursed the new Procurator, and began to pelt the soldiers with stones. Fearing that the Antonia detachment would be too weak to cope with so savage an onslaught, Cumanus marched his entire forces round from the Prætorium. At the clash of their footsteps, and the gleam of their swords, the wretched unarmed mass of pilgrims was struck with panic, and made a rush to escape. The gates of the temple were choked up, and a multitude, variously stated at ten and at twenty thousand was trampled and crushed to death. In A. D. 52 Felix became Procurator of Judea. *F. W. Farrar.*

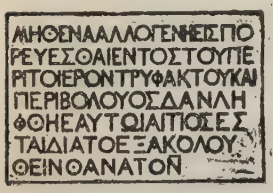
38. *The Sicarii* were so called from the Latin *sica,* a short sword or dagger, which they carried and concealed under their garments. These disturbers of the public peace are frequently mentioned by Josephus. They were a set of murderers who arose in these unfortunate times. They frequented Jerusalem especially at the times of the feasts, and mingling themselves among the multitude, murdered their enemies. They also were ready to be hired by others for the purpose of assassination. Felix is said to have hired one of these Sicarii to murder the high priest Jonathan, and to have protected the murderer. After such a crime, according to Josephus, many were slain every day: no man deemed his life secure, and the Sicarri increased in boldness and excesses. *Paton J. Gloag.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

28. *He brought Greeks into the temple.* There was one special offence in regard to which the Jews had been accorded the singular privilege of proceeding even against Roman citizens according to Jewish law. Within the larger square forming the outer court of the Herodian temple, there was an oblong quadrangular space enclosed by strong walls. This was the so-called inner

wall, or "the court" in the strict sense of the word. This court was approached by a flight of forty-five steps, and at the foot of this stair was a stone fence within which no Gentile was allowed to pass. Any Gentile who ventured to pass this boundary and set foot within the inner court was punished with death; and the Roman authorities so respected the scruples of the Jews in regard to this matter that they sanctioned the execution of this sentence even in those cases in which Roman citizens had been the offenders. To this fence notices were attached at certain distances from each other, with the prohibition and penalty for infringing inscribed on them in Greek and Latin. *Schürer,* in *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ.*

Here is a reproduction of an inscription on a slab which in 1871 M. Clermont-Ganneau found built into the walls of a small mosque in the Via Dolorosa. This is the translation: Let no Gentile enter inside of the barrier and the fence around the sanctuary. Any one trespassing will bring death upon himself as a penalty.



Facsimile of the Inscription on a Warning Tablet now in the Museum at Constantinople

To-day no Jew is allowed to set foot on the temple area in Jerusalem.

28. *He hath defiled this holy place.* To defile the temple was what every enemy of the Jews tried to do. Antiochus, Helidorus, Pompey, had profaned it; and very recently the Samaritans had been charged with deliberately polluting it by scattering dead men's bones over its precincts. *F. W. Farrar.*

39. *A citizen of no mean city.* It must be remembered that the feeling of an ancient citizen for his own city was much stronger than that which is in modern times entertained usually toward one's native town. All the feeling of patriotism which now binds us to our country irrespective of the town to which we belong, was in ancient times directed toward one's city. "Fatherland" denoted one's city, and not one's country. Both *Patria* in Latin and *Patris* in Greek, were applied to the city of one's home. It was only to a small degree, and among the most educated Greeks, that Hellas, as a country, was an idea of power. The educated native of a Cilician city like Tarsus regarded the country Cilicia as implying rudeness and barbarism, and prided himself on being a Hellene rather than a Cilician; but Hellas to him meant a certain standard and ideal of culture and municipal freedom. He was a "Tarsian," but Tarsus was and had long been a Hellenic city, and the Greek-speaking Tarsians were either Helenes or Jews, but not "Cilicians" in the sense of nationality, only "Cilicians" as members of the province.

Moreover, citizenship implied much more in ancient times than it means now. We can now migrate to a new city, and almost immediately acquire citizenship there, losing it in our former home. But in ancient days the Tarsian who migrated to another city continued to rank as a Tarsian, and Tarsus was still his Fatherland, while in his new home he was merely a resident alien. His descendants, too, continued to be mere resident aliens. Occasionally, and as a special compliment, a resident alien was granted the citizenship with his descendants, but a special enactment was needed in each individual case and family. The city that was his Fatherland and his home mattered much to Paul. It had a place in his heart. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *Pauline and Other Studies.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Paul was received gladly by the brethren at Jerusalem, and the day after his arrival he met the authorities of the Church there, the elders with James, the brother of Jesus, at their head. None of the twelve are mentioned; they were probably widely scattered on various missions. The money collected from the Gentile Christians was presented by the delegates, and Paul gave a full report of the work accomplished during his last missionary journey. Then the company glorified God and in their turn called Paul's attention to the large numbers of Jewish Christians in the city, all "zealous for the law," who had been falsely told that he taught the Gentiles not to circumcise their children nor to follow the customs of Moses. These would hear of Paul's presence in

Jerusalem and there would be trouble. To conciliate them the elders and James advised Paul to prove the falsity of the report by purifying himself in the temple and paying the charges for four others who could not shave their heads in token that they had fulfilled their vow till expensive offerings had been made. At the same time they ratified again the concessions made to the Gentile Christians at the time of the Council, Lesson VIII of second quarter. Their proposition involved no question of principle, and Paul consented to do as they asked. It was during his presence in the temple for this purpose that the tumult was stirred up which led to his arrest. The time was probably just before Pentecost, A. D. 56. See page 19 of this Guide.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is in the temple courts and on the stairs leading up to the Tower of Antonia. See the diagram and account of the temple courts in Lesson IV, first quarter, the quotation from Shürer in "Light from Oriental Life," and "The Approach to the Lesson for Younger Pupils."

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Upon a rock at the northwest corner of the temple area, surrounded by high walls, stood the Tower of Antonia—a fortress and a castle all in one. It was an immense structure divided into splendid apartments. Josephus says that having every thing necessary in itself, it seemed a city, while in magnificence it resembled a palace. At each corner there was a tower, the tallest being the one which overlooked the whole temple area. In this tower soldiers were always quartered, and when the Jews celebrated their great annual festivals an extra number of soldiers was always brought there to watch the people. Two flights of steps led from the fortress to the temple courts. At the Passover season when Paul made his last journey to Jerusalem, the guard on the watch saw a great tumult in the court below; and without waiting to see what was the matter he informed the chief captain. As the latter with a large body of armed troops rushed down the steps he saw a mob dragging a man into the outer court and beating him. Who was this man? Why was he in the temple?

For Older Pupils. "Paul a Prisoner" is part of the title of our lesson for to-day and for the six succeeding lessons. You know that Rome has been the goal in Paul's mind for some time; and these seven lessons tell us how he attained it—not as he had planned, as a leader visiting the Church at Rome, but as a prisoner, and we shall see that the divine over-ruling was far better for the cause he loved than would have been his own way.

It was in this city of Jerusalem that we were first introduced to the great hero whose work and fortunes we have long been following. What was the occasion? There are many points of resemblance between that scene and this of our text to-day. What had happened since Paul first reached Jerusalem on his last journey? (See the Historical Background). Who were the Jews who stirred up the people in the temple against him? What was their false charge? Jews from Asia were among those who disputed with Stephen and had him falsely accused. What was their charge? Whence did the frenzied mob drag him and what was Paul's part in the tragedy? What is his part in the scene twenty years later that almost proved a tragedy?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I They Supposed

Cruel Suppositions. The Jews from Asia who fiercely hated Paul had seen him going about the streets of Jerusalem with Trophimus of Ephesus, and when later they saw him in the temple court with the Nazarites, they at once jumped to the conclusion that the latter, too, were Gentiles, or "they supposed" that one of them was Trophimus himself, as the text reads. There are a great many people in the world at the present day who are ready to jump at conclusions. A suspicion is aroused, a supposition is formulated, a certainty is stated. Paul's enemies see him with Trophimus on the streets of Jerusalem

and they declare, "he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place."

Thou shalt not bear false witness. Is it not true that a very large part of the slanders in circulation have some supposition as their basis? And is not to start a slander on a mere supposition one of the most despicable things one can do? "The third tongue, let it be accused, for it hath laid low many corpses" is a Syriac saying. The "third tongue" is the slanderous tongue, called thus because it kills three—the slanderer, the listener, and the victim. An essayist defines gossip as "the putting of two and two together and making five of them"; then is slander the putting of two and two together and making five hundred of them.

Ignorant Suppositions. A continuous stream of persons passed through the Art gallery, and a woman sitting there listened with no small amusement to the comments made upon a certain small portrait by a distinguished American artist. The picture was of a young girl, sitting bolt up-right on a straight-backed chair, a small hard pillow placed stiffly between her back and the chair. The child had on a little blue sack and looked out of the canvas with bright, wistful eyes.

"883. Sargent. Of course. How exactly like him with his continual mannerisms. To pose a poor child in that awkward and difficult position. No girl would ever sit so of her own accord." Such were the frequent expressions of the many. Finally an elderly woman, beautifully dressed, her face alive with intelligence, came in search of a particular picture. Stopping before the small head she examined it with manifest satisfaction, and turned to her companion with moist eyes.

"You know this dear child has a great affliction, a hardening of the spine, so that her back is stiff and this is her habitual posture. She has a lovely character, as one may see shining from these eyes, and Sargent has translated it to the life. Without the pose he has given her, however, something would have seemed lacking. As it is, it is perfect."

The woman on the bench grew thoughtful. Is it always so, she asked herself, that everything has its explanation? that what we condemn as exaggerated or false is simply something we do not yet understand? and that our hasty conclusions merely stamp us as ignorant? *Lucy Elliot Keeler,* in *If I were a Girl again.*

A Wholesome Lesson. "What a shame for a big, strong man to be such a slave to an invalid wife!" were the words spoken a little too loudly by a girl in the saloon of an ocean steamer as a couple went down the stairway. An hour later the man in question took a seat beside the critic who had formed and uttered her hasty judgment. "I think your remark, which I accidentally overheard, justifies me in telling you a little about my 'slavery' as you call it," he said. "It began thirty years ago, when my young bride nursed me through yellow-fever—*alone*—because every one else had fled in panic. She did not have a sound hour's sleep for three weeks. Most of the time I was violently delirious, and how she managed to control me was a wonder. She brought me safely out of the disease before she fell ill with it herself. After she recovered she pulled me through a worse trial. I was in business with a man who proved a scoundrel, and for three years everybody except my wife believed that his villiany was mine. When I lost money and position, she did the work of three women. When sickness and death visited our home she met them with courage. For twenty-five years she did not spare herself. Five years ago her health gave way. She will never be well again. My 'slavery' is the slavery of whole-hearted devotion to one of the noblest women ever given to earth. May you some day command as happy a 'slave'!" Adapted from the *Youth's Companion.*

II Suffer Hardship as a Good Soldier of Christ

The Meaning of our Golden Text. It is taken from Paul's second letter to Timothy. In the St. James' Version it reads: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," but in the Revised Version it has a little different meaning, "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." Professor F. G. Peabody points out the new meaning in his

book entitled "Mornings in the College Chapel." The Old Version says *Endure hardness* as though it were an appeal to an individual. The Revised Version in the margin says: *Take thy part in suffering hardship;* take, that is to say, your share of the hardship which belongs to the common cause. "Come in with the rest of us" it means, "in bearing the hard times." There were plenty of hard times in those days. Paul was a prisoner in Rome; Nero's persecutions were abroad. When the aged Paul, however, writes to the young man whom he affectionately calls "his beloved child," he does not say to him: "I hope, my beloved child, that you will find life easier than I have, or that the times will clear up before you have to take the lead." He says, on the contrary, "The times are very hard. Come in with us, then, and take your share of the hardship."

Many people in the modern world are trying to look at life in quite an opposite way. They want to make it soft and easy for themselves and their sons. The problem of life is to get rid of hardness. Trouble and care are to be kept away from their beloved children. Young people are to have the good time while they can. The apostle strikes a wholly different note. Writing to a young man of the modern time he would say: "There is a deal of hardship, of poverty, of industrial distress in the world, and I charge you to take your share in it! Are you not old enough to enlist in Christ's army? Be a good soldier, not a shirk or a runaway."

The Reward. Timothy, to whom the apostle addressed this letter, was in danger on the side of "softness." He was in a hard place, and he was more than a little inclined to compromise and surrender. "Fight the good fight," says Paul to him. "Contend earnestly in the noble contest. The prize is worth the cost. The reward will compensate for all the hardship." And he makes the same appeal to us across the centuries. To us, faced as we are by our difficulties, he says, "Fight on, struggle on; the fight is a 'beautiful' fight, the contest is a 'noble' contest, and the prize is a crown of eternal life." And for our comfort let us remember this, that there are reinforcements always available by the help and succour of which we can always win the victory. We come off "more than conquerors" through Him that loved us. Let us enlist for this "good fight," this "noble contest." What a joy it will be when life comes to a close to be able to say with Paul, "I have fought the good fight... Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." *J. D. Jones,* in *Sunday-School Chronicle.*

On the Frontier. As a nation we owe a debt we can never repay to the soldiers of the cross at the front, who have endured, and endure to-day, hardships of every kind. They are cut off from the society which they love; often they live in dugouts, sometimes in rooms over a saloon; going weeks without fresh meat, sometimes suffering from hunger, and for a long time without a cent in the house. Yet who ever heard them complain? Their great grief is that fields lie near to them white for the harvest, while with hands already full, they can only pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers.

Often there is but one man preaching in a county which is larger than Massachusetts. He is cut off from libraries, minister's meetings, and to a large extent from the sympathies of more fortunate brethren, and is often unable to send his children to college. These men still stand their ground until they die, ofttimes unknown, but leaving foundations for others to build on. *W. G. Puddefoot,* in *The Minute Man on the Frontier.*

A Tale of Modern Persecution. Twenty years ago Bible work in the Province of Quebec had to face no ordinary difficulties, especially in outlying districts where prejudice and superstition possessed the minds of the people. In the county of Beauce during 1886-8, our Quebec Auxiliary employed a colporteur named Jules Fresque, who was not afraid to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. From him a farmer named Pierre Rodrique bought a French New Testament, and studied it diligently and was led to accept its teachings. He became active in spreading abroad the gospel, distributing several dozen New Testaments among the farmers in his neighborhood. He met with bitter opposition. The local Roman Catholic priest collected the books, all save those in the house of Pierre Rodrique, and after mass one Sunday morning publicly burned them, denouncing them as bad

books and threatening any one who obtained and read another copy. Rodrique was summoned before the Roman Catholic bishop, and when he refused to obey him and give up his Bibles and his faith, he was publicly denounced and cursed from the altar, and his friends were forbidden to deal with him or recognize him in any way whatever. They must not even visit him in sickness—they were to leave him to die like a dog in the ditch, as a traitor to his race and religion.

As the direct result of this, Rodrique was boycotted and attacked in merciless fashion. His cattle were hamstrung and poisoned; his only horse was killed; his barn was demolished; his ripe barley field was set on fire. For the Word of God's sake he was driven off his farm, a ruined man—but rich in faith. In the end Rodrique and his family were compelled to seek in the United States what was denied them in Quebec.

To-day they are settled at Waterville, in the State of Maine—prosperous, happy, and useful. Rodrique himself is a successful evangelist. Moreover, the burning of the Testaments and the persecution of their possessors, brought forth fruit for the Gospel in the county of Beauce. A considerable number of persons followed the footsteps of Rodrique and migrated to Waterville. In that town there are now nearly two hundred families who originally belonged to Beauce, and who have now embraced the Reformed faith.

It is happily true that the events which we have described could not take place to-day in the Province of Quebec. Persecution, indeed is not ended; the New Testament, without note or comment, is still a forbidden book, and its possessors are ostracized. Nevertheless, the most benighted and superstitious districts of French Canada are hastening towards a clearer light and larger liberty. *E. J. Stobo,* in the *Bible in the World.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

How little do they see what *is,* who frame
Their hasty judgment upon that which *seems.* *Southey.*

We often err by generalizng with more rapidity than wisdom. *Arthur Helps.*

Make no accusation which you can not prove, and believe no accusation which is not proved to you—is as good a rule for the street corner as for the court room. *Youth's Companion.*

Be a hero in the strife. *Longfellow.*

If it is not right, do not do it; if it is not true, do not say it. *Aurelius.*

Brace us to play the man under afflictions. *Robert Louis Stevenson.*

Great duties are before me, and great songs;
And whether crowned or crownless when I fall,
It matter not, so as God's work is done. *Alexander Smith.*

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 5.10.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Let us be careful how we judge others. If we find that we are given to drawing hasty conclusions on insufficient evidence in regard to the actions or motives of others, let us put a watch upon ourselves at this danger point.

Life is a constant warfare. There is no life without its hardships. How are we bearing ours? Courageously and nobly like Paul, fighting a good fight, having first put on the whole armor of God? Robert Louis Stevenson was one who knew how to suffer hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He fought a long and losing fight against ill health, but he was unfailingly courageous and cheerful and never allowed his sufferings to sadden the lives of others. This beautiful prayer of his should be ours: Go with each of us to rest; and when the day returns, call us with morning faces, eager to labor, eager to be happy if happiness shall be our portion, and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The plan of the elders to have Paul prove to the Jews that he was loyal

to the customs of Moses by taking part in a ceremonial in the temple, did not succeed because of the presence in Jerusalem of fiercely hostile Jews from Asia. They saw Paul in the temple with his Nazarites and they stirred up the crowd against him and seized him, exclaiming that he everywhere spoke against the people and the law and the temple, and had defiled the temple by bringing Gentiles into the holy place. Their excuse for the last assertion was that they had seen Paul in the city with the Ephesian Trophimus and they assumed, therefore, that he had brought him into the temple. To prevent the defiling of the inner court by his blood, the frenzied mob dragged him into the outer court, and the gates between were then shut. Roman soldiers on guard quickly informed the chief captain of the disturbance, and with a large company of soldiers and centurions he hastily ran down the stairway leading from the fortress. Paul was seized and bound with chains, while the captain sought to learn the cause of the tumult. Failing in this, because of the uproar, he ordered Paul taken to the fortress. The crowd, maddened at losing their victim, shouted "away with him," and pressed so close upon the soldiers that he was taken off his feet as they reached the stairs and was born aloft. Paul then addressed the captain, and the latter, surprised at being spoken to in cultured Greek, exclaimed, "Thou art not, then, as I thought, that Egyptian who led four thousand assassins out in the wilderness."

Proudly Paul answered that he was a Jew, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city, and he asked permission to address the people. This being granted, he faced the mob below and in Hebrew called them "Brethren and fathers" and then he told them that he had once believed as they, having been a pupil of Gamaliel and most zealous of the Pharisees in persecuting the followers of Jesus Christ, that he had gone to Damascus for this purpose, but a divine revelation on the way had changed his life, that on his return to Jerusalem while he was worshipping in that very temple he had fallen into a trance and had received his commission to preach to the Gentiles. The word *Gentiles* inflamed the mob, and they began to hurl dust in the air, to wave their robes, and clamor for his death. The chief captain hurried Paul into the castle and ordered him scourged. When he was bound Paul calmly asked if it were lawful for them to scourge a Roman. Frightened at this, the centurion went to the captain and told him their prisoner was a Roman citizen. He came at once to learn whether this were true. Paul's bonds were loosed and on the morrow a meeting of the Sanhedrin was summoned to consider his case.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

The motive of the elders of Jerusalem in the request made of Paul, and his motive in yielding to them.

That a man's duty to his own beliefs is subordinate to his duty to beliefs that are greater than the individual is held in "The Philosophy of Loyalty," by Professor Josiah Royce.

How ready should one be in these days to accuse another of not being orthodox?

Hasty conclusions, vague assertions, malicious misrepresentation in political warfare.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. When had another apostle been imprisoned in Jerusalem? (Lesson II, second quarter.) 2. How was his release secured? 3. Why were the Judean Christians friendly to him and hostile to Paul? 4. Describe the meeting before the Sanhedrin, Acts 23.1-10. 5. What words of Jesus explain Paul's figure of speech in verse 3? (Matt. 23.27.) 6. In what other city had Paul been divinely encouraged in the night? 7. When had Paul expressed a wish to see Rome? (Acts 19.21; Rom. 1.10-13.) 8. Since Paul had been divinely assured that he should go to Rome, why did he send his nephew to Lysias with the news of the plot against him? 9. Was the excuse for sending for Paul, verse 15, a plausible one? 10. Give an account of the journey to Felix. (Acts 23. 23-35.)

LESSON II—OCTOBER 10

PAUL A PRISONER—THE PLOT

Read Acts 22.30-23.35. Commit verse 11.

Golden Text

I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge, and my fortress: My God: in whom I trust. Psalm 91.2.

LESSON TEXT Acts 23.11-24

11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12 And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 And they were more than forty that made this conspiracy. 14 And they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, before he comes near, are ready to slay him. 16 But Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, and he came and entered into the castle and told Paul. 17 And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath something to tell him. 18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee. 19 And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, What is it that thou has to tell me? 20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. 21 Do not thou therefore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, who have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor to drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee. 22 So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me. 23 And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: 24 and *he bade them* provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

11. *So must thou bear witness also at Rome.* See Rom. 1.10-13 and Acts 19.21 for Paul's expressed desire to visit Rome. His purpose declared in Acts 20.27 is to be realized.

12. *Bound themselves under a curse.* See Psa. 37.12-13.

14. *The chief priests and the elders.* The leaders of the Sanhedrin.

15. "The Bezan verse begins 'We ask you to do this for us: when ye have summoned the council, signify.' This makes clear that the Sanhedrin was first to meet on the morrow and then send a formal message to Lysias" (*Rackham*).—*Ye would judge of his case more exactly.* A plausible excuse.

20. The Jews would *judge,* verse 15; Lysias would *inquire.*

23. *The third hour of the night.* Nine o'clock in the evening.

24. He bade them provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon. After

his beating in the temple Paul would be unable to go on foot a distance of over sixty miles.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

14. *They came to the chief priests and the elders.* Far from rejecting this suggestion with execration, they agreed to it with avidity. But a secret known to forty conspirators, and requiring the complicity of an indefinite number more, is no secret at all. There were sure to be dark hints, ominous gestures, words of ill-concealed triumph, and, indeed, so unanimous among the orthodox Jews, and even, we fear, among some nominal Jewish Christians, was the detestation of the man who taught "apostasy from Moses," that in most circles there was no need for any pretense of concealment. When St. Peter had been in prison, and in peril of execution, the Christian community of Jerusalem had been in a ferment of alarm and sorrow, and prayer had been made day and night without ceasing to God for him; but St. Peter, and especially St. Peter of that early time, was regarded with feelings very different from those with which the Judaic believers looked on the bold genius whose dangerous independence treated Mosaism and its essential covenant as a thing of the past for converted Gentiles. We hear of no prayer from any of the elders or the "many myriads" on behalf of St. Paul. He owed to a relative, and not to the church, the watchful sympathy which alone rescued him from murder. *F. W. Farrar,* in *The Life and Work of St. Paul.*

23. *He called unto him two of the centurions.* There are many things which we would be glad to know at the moment when Paul leaves Jerusalem never to see it again. What were the thoughts of his great heart? Did he communicate with James and the elders? Did he have an opportunity to say farewell to his kinsfolk? Luke omits everything else to write minutely how the order and discipline of the Roman world rescued Paul and defeated the hate of Judaism. He tells the number of soldiers, the number of their commanders, he describes the journey and makes us see the whole event as distinctly as if he had been there. We can almost hear the rattling of the soldiers' sabers, and the clang of the horses' hoofs as they start down the road to Antipatris. If Luke lingers thus over the story and fills it with details, he must intend to show how God's invisible hand could use the world power, which He had ordained, to serve Him in protecting His servant from apostate Judaism. *J. M. Stifler,* in *Introduction to the Acts.*

23. *At the third hour of the night.* The road lay first northwards along the high mountainous region which divides the valley of the Jordan from the great western plain of Judea. About midnight they would reach Gophna, and turn to descend the coast on the left. Presently they began to descend among the western eminences and valleys of the mountain-country, startling the shepherd on the hills of Ephraim, and rousing the village peasant, who woke only to curse his oppressor, as he heard the hoofs of the horses on the pavement, and the well-known tramp of the Roman soldiers. About daybreak they came to the ridge of the last hill. The road now turned northwards, across the rich lands of the plain of Sharon, through fields of wheat and barley, just then almost ready for the harvest. On the east were the mountains of Samaria, rising gradually above each other, and bounding the plain in that direction; on the left lay a line of low wooded hills, shutting it in from the sea. Between the higher and lower range, but on the level ground, was Antipatris, whence the foot-soldiers returned to Jerusalem. They were no longer necessary to secure Paul's safety, for no plot by the way was now to be apprehended, and their presence might be required in the fortress of Antonia. In the course of the afternoon the remaining soldiers with their weary horses would enter the streets of Cæsarea, and the centurion would proceed at once to the governor and give up his prisoner, at the same time presenting the despatch with which he was charged by the commandant of the garrison at Jerusalem. Condensed from *The Life of Paul,* by *Conybeare and Howson.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

12. *Bound themselves with an oath.* Literally, "anathematized themselves," invoked the curse of God upon themselves, in case of violation of their vow,

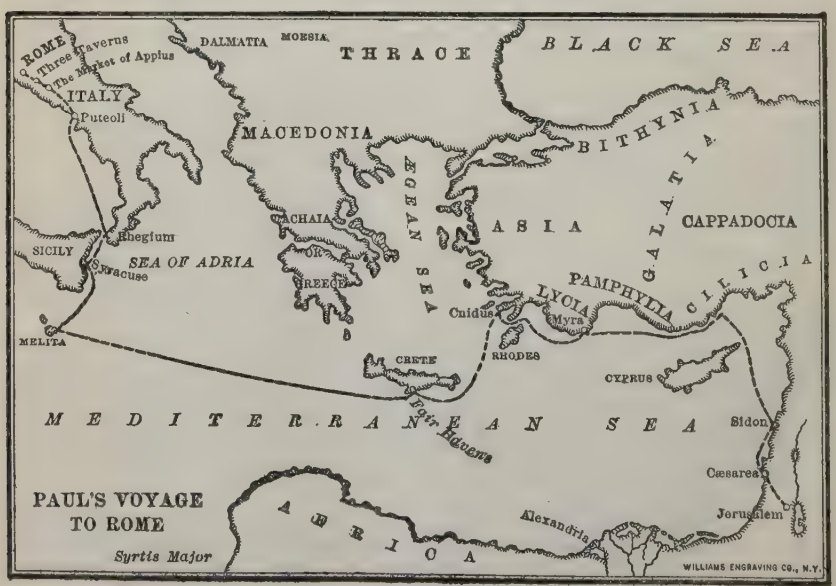
asserting that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Such was at this time the state of Jewish society, that such execrable oaths were not only made by the fanatical Jews, but made with the cognizance and approval of their rulers. Josephus mentions a similar conspiracy against Herod the Great, into which a number of Jews entered, on account of his introducing new customs, which they esteemed violations of the Mosaic law. Ten men conspired to slay him, and swore to undergo any dangers in the attempt; and when the plot was discovered, and they were put to death, they declared that the conspiracy to which they had sworn was a holy and pious act.

The Jews who had made such oaths could, in case of failure, easily procure absolution from their rabbis. Lightfoot gives the following quotation from the Talmud: "He that hath made a vow not to eat anything, woe to him if he eat, and woe to him if he eat not. If he eat, he sinneth against his vow; if he eat not, he sinneth against his life. What must a man do in his case? Let him go to the wise men, and they will loose his vow; according as it is written, The tongue of the wise is health." *Paton J. Gloag.*

14. *They came to the chief priests and the elders.* That they should, without scruple, propose such a conspiracy to the supreme court of the land, seems to the modern man almost incredible, but accords with the Jewish opinions and practices of that age. Thus Philo, who is one of the purest religious teachers outside the New Testament, directly justifies the assassination of apostates from Judaism. "It is highly proper that all who have a zeal for virtue should have a right to punish with their own hands, without delay, those who are guilty of this crime." *Lyman Abbott, The Acts.*

24. *Bring him safe unto Felix the governor.* Lysias was extremely glad to get rid of a prisoner who created such excitement, and who was the object of an animosity so keen that it might at any moment lead to a riot. At that day, too, charges of bribery flew about in the most dangerous manner. Celer, a Roman knight of far higher rank than himself, had actually been dragged by Jews round the walls of Jerusalem, and finally beheaded, for receiving a bribe from the Samaritans. So corrupt was the Roman administration at the hands of even the highest officials, that if Paul were murdered Lysias might easily have been charged with having accepted a bribe to induce him to connive at this nefarious conspiracy. *F. W. Farrar,* in *The Life and Work of Paul.*

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND



The day after the riot of the Jews in the temple and the arrest of Paul, Lysias summoned a meeting of the Sanhedrin and brought his prisoner before them. Paul had been accused in the temple of teaching contrary to the law, and his first words protested his innocence, his conscience testified that his life had been loyal. Thereupon the high priest ordered those near to smite Paul in the mouth, and Paul's fiery temper flamed forth: God shall smite thee, thou whited wall, he boldly declared (the high priest was what Jesus had called the Pharisees, a whited sepulchre, like the tombs, full of corruption within but presenting a fair appearance without); sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Those near protested against such language to the high priest, and Paul became calmer and confessed that he had forgotten his office, that he should not have spoken evil of a ruler. Knowing full well that he could receive no just judgment from that tribunal, he "flung an apple of discord among them" by declaring himself a thorough Pharisee, persecuted because of his Messianic hope and belief in the resurrection of the dead. Thereupon the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, were violently angered, the Pharisees took Paul's part against them, and so stormy a scene ensued that Lysias, fearing for the life of his prisoner, ordered his troops to take him back to the castle.

The scene of to-day's lesson is in the Tower of Antonia, the night and the day following the visit to the Sanhedrin.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When Paul and his company stopped at Cæsarea on their way to Jerusalem what did Agabus prophesy? (Lesson XI of last quarter.) How did Paul regard the efforts made to keep him from going on to Jerusalem? About two weeks have passed since he was in Cæsarea, free to come or go as he chose, and in our lesson to-day we see him back again in Cæsarea, but in prison. Very exciting have been the events crowded into these two weeks, and he has barely escaped with his life. Indeed, you can read no true story of adventure so full of stirring action and hair-breadth escapes as that of Paul from the time he left Cæsarea for Jerusalem till he reached Rome. (See the Historical Background.)

For Older Pupils. During the Civil War Richard Oglesby, Governor of Illinois, lost all hope in the success of the cause he had so much at heart, and wrote President Lincoln that he thought all was lost. In answer he received this telegram: "Dear Dick: Read Exodus 14.13, Fear ye not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Abraham Lincoln." Paul's life has been a strenuous one, he has dared and endured all things, but now he has to endure without the daring, he is in prison and must stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. He does not fear, for there comes a message of comfort. What?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Trust and Work

Paul's Course. We read in the eleventh verse of our lesson that the Lord stood by Paul at night and said, "Be of god cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." And then the next day Paul's nephew comes and tells him of the plot to slay him when being taken again before the Sanhedrin. Assured that he is to reach Rome, why does he not let matters take their course, expecting that in some miraculous way his life will be spared when the assassins make their attack? Why does he take the precaution to have his nephew inform Lysias of the plot against his life? Paul had perfect confidence in God's care and help, but this confidence rightly stimulated him to do his part toward securing his own safety. His trust in God made him calm and collected, showed him the best thing to be done, and encouraged him to do it. The fatalist believes that whatever is decreed will be, regardless of what man may do. The Christian believes that he is a co-worker with God, not only able but under obligation to do his part toward the consummation of God's will.

Two Ways of Trusting. In the paper published by the Salvation Army this

suggestive story is told. A mother discovered her little daughter lying in the middle of a muddy garden path. She urged her to get up, but the child refused.

"I'm waiting," she placidly remarked.

"What for?" asked her mother.

"For God to pick me up," the young person answered. "I falled down and I pwayed God pick me up, and He doesn't do it vewy quick."

Her mother explained to her that she might lie there all day before God worked a miracle for her lazy little self, that He had given her sturdy arms and legs, an intelligent brain, the power of picking herself up, and He expected her to answer her own prayer.

There is another story, well known, of a small girl who prayed God to keep her brother from catching the birds, and then told her mother that she was sure God would do what she had asked, for she had been out and smashed the traps. Which child's "theology" was right?

Prayer for God's guidance, calm decision as to the right course to pursue, trust in God's help, and then courage to do—are not these the right steps in any emergency? "I put my shoulder to the wheel with my best judgment, and trust to God for the rest," wrote Admiral Farragut the week before he entered Mobile Bay. He was a valiant Christian officer, he trusted in God and sought His guidance, but he never failed to do all in his own power to secure success.

Pull your own Oar. Christ never promises smooth water to His followers. Nor is His Church a vast assemblage of towboats, pulled along by sheer power of the divine will. Each Christian has his own oar of personal responsibility to pull, and his own rudder of conscience to steer with, and must "work his passage" as a free agent. *Theodore L. Cuyler,* in *The Presbyterian.*

II Vows

They bound themselves under a Curse. The forty men who made the plot to kill Paul "bound themselves under a curse" saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him. The two Greek words translated "bound themselves under a curse" mean literally anathematized themselves, made themselves anathema, that is, devoted. You remember that in the taking of Jericho it was declared that the city shall be devoted, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord. Jericho was to be utterly destroyed as a religious act, its inhabitants were to be put to death. Every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord, the law in Leviticus read; none devoted, which shall be of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death. These men devoted themselves to death and their vow was that they would taste nothing till they had killed Paul. It was a wicked vow, made by wicked men, and therefore probably not kept.

Some Other Vows. Bravest of the brave, God's soldier and Israel's deliverer, Jephthah is remembered mainly, if not solely, by his extraordinary vow. It was made on the eve of battle, when the approaching conflict with the fierce sons of Ammon made him grave, solemn, and thoughtful. He felt thrown back on God, and in such moments prayers are offered, vows are made. No one can approve of the terms of Jephthah's vow. The scope was too wide, too indefinite. If God would grant him victory, he promised to offer up as a sacrifice the first thing he met coming forth from the door of his house. We know what happened. What he met was his daughter, his beloved and only child. Horror-stricken, he rent his clothes and cried, "Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord and I cannot go back." Whether Jephthah actually slew his daughter, or devoted her to perpetual virginity, is still keenly debated. Handel, in his great oratorio, takes the latter view, only he makes an angel interpose to stop the sacrifice. The scene is dramatic, the daughter is ready to be offered. Jephthah breaks out in the classic lines:

Waft her, angels, through the skies
Far above yon azure plain;
Glorious there, like you, to rise
There, like you, forever reign.

While the priests hesitate, and Iphis, the daughter, urges them to do their duty, suddenly an angel appears and says:

Rise, Jephthah, and ye reverent priests withhold
The slaughterous hand. No vow can disannul
The law of God. And yet shall be fulfilled.
Thy daughter, Jephthah, thou must dedicate
To God, in pure and virgin state forever;
As not an object meet for sacrifice
Else had she fallen an holocaust to God.

And thus, according to Handel and others, a way of escape was found for Jephthah out of the dire consequences of his foolish vow. Whether that was the case or not, his experience is a warning beacon which, after the lapse of thousands of years, still sheds its crimson light across the troubled ocean of life.

Saul once swore a foolish oath that any of his soldiers who broke their fast should die, and the first to disobey was his own son Jonathan. The army interposed and saved him. Herod made a rash vow when he promised the daughter of Herodias anything she chose to ask, and she asked the head of John the Baptist. Some vows are simply silly, such as make men crawl on the ground like reptiles, or climb marble stairs on their knees, as Luther did in his unenlightened days. Let us place a guard on our lips. Let us never make a vow whose fulfilment would involve us in sin. *David Watson*, in *Perfect Manhood*.

Not Strong enough to give up a Rash Vow. Mrs. Mary Wilkins Freeman in her story entitled "A Conflict Ended," has given us a powerful picture of how a stubborn determination to abide by a decision once taken may in reality be but a lack of power to acknowledge the error.

Marcus Woodman declared that if a certain minister was appointed over the church he attended he himself would never enter that church again. "You'll have to sit on the steps, then," said another man to him. "I will sit on the steps fifty years before I go into this house, if that man's settled here," he retorted. The minister was settled there, and for many a long year, in rain, snow and shine, Marcus Woodman sat on the church steps. His views in regard to the minister changed, but still he would not go inside. When he was asked why he did not go into the meeting-house like other people, if now he liked the minister, he replied, "Don't you s'pose I would if I could? Do you s'pose I've took any comfort sitting on them steps in the winter snows and summer suns? Don't you s'pose I'd give all I am worth any time the last ten years to have got up and walked in the church with the rest of the folks? All I know is, I can't make myself give it up. I can't. I ain't made strong enuf to."

III Missionary Topic In God will I trust

The Comfort given Paul. Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. As one reads these words of encouragement that Paul heard in the dark prison at night, one involuntarily thinks of the modern phrase so often spoken with a laugh, "Cheer up, cheer up, the worst is yet to come!" Paul had testified concerning Jesus the Christ at Jerusalem, and beating and imprisonment had been his fate. He was to testify in Rome, and imprisonment and finally death awaited him. And yet he was to be of good cheer! Paul was not afraid of suffering. He had known from the beginning of his enlistment in Christ's service that his life was to be one of hardship. When Ananias was directed to go to Paul in Damascus, he was told that Paul was to bear the Lord's name before the Gentiles and Kings, and the children of Israel, and to be shown how many things he must suffer for His name's sake, Acts 9.15, 16. Hardship and suffering could not terrify Paul, and he was reassured and comforted by these words in the prison. The divine promise of presence and help does not mean that there will be freedom from trouble; it means that there will be help given to bear whatever comes. I will say of Jehovah, he is my refuge, and my fortress; my God; in whom I trust. The worst may be yet to come, but I will cheer up, for Jehovah is my fortress in whom I trust.

Wait only upon God. Captain Allen Francis Gardiner and his companions

on Picton Island in 1851 died slowly of starvation. This brave sailor was actuated by the one burning desire to spread the truth of God among the degraded heathen of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, who are some of the very lowest of the human race. Landing with one or two companions on the wintry, storm-swept, hungry coast of Picton Island, deserted and abandoned by the rescue which should have come, these poor men slowly starved to death in long-continued agony. Did their faith fail under those frightful circumstances? It failed not! They continued in mutual and jubilant trust in God. "Asleep or awake," wrote one of them—poor Richard Williams— in his diary, "I am happy beyond the poor compass of words to tell." In August, 1851, after weeks of ravening hunger and freezing cold, Allen Gardiner wrote, "God has kept me in perfect peace." And so, unmurmuringly trustful to the last, they died of hunger; and when their bodies were found a month afterwards, the captain and sailors who had gone too late to rescue them cried like children. But it was found that Allen Gardiner had painted upon a rock beside the cavern in which these hapless ones had taken refuge a hand pointing downwards, and underneath it the words, "My soul, wait thou only upon God." *The Bible in the World.*

The Right Spirit. Said a Cardinal Legate sent to Augsburg by the Pope to discuss matters privately with Luther: "What do you think the Pope cares for the opinion of a German boor? The Pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany. Do you expect your princes to take up arms to defend you—you, a wretched worm like you? I tell you, No! and where will you be then—where will you be then?" Calmly Luther answered: "Where I am now: in the hands of Almighty God." It has been such trust as this that has sustained God's workers in all fields.

SENTENCE SERMONS

Deep below as high above
Sweeps the circle of God's love. *Whittier.*

There's but one way in which man can ever help God—that is by letting God help him. *Ruskin.*

Trust in God, and keep your powder dry. *Cromwell.*

That prayer is insincere which is not followed up by hearty efforts to secure the thing sought. *Marcus Dods.*

God's presence in the trial is much better than exemption from the trial. *C. H. Mackintosh.*

If you fear, cast all your care on God;
That anchor holds. *Tennyson.*

Pray, but swing your hammer. *Spanish Proverb.*

It is a great sin to swear unto a sin,
But greater sin to keep a sinful oath.
Who can be bound by any solemn oath
To do a murderous deed? *Shakespeare.*

Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel. Phil. 1.12.

Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. Josh. 1.9.

I will fear no evil; for thou art with me. Psa. 23.4.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

When Lysias brought Paul before the Sanhedrin to learn of what his prisoner was accused, he was obliged to send soldiers to take Paul by force from among them, for he feared lest he be torn to pieces by them. When the forty Jews asked their aid in getting Paul where he could be slain, they were nothing loth. And yet they were respectable men, members of the supreme court of Judea. To what lengths will unrestrained hatred and fanaticism lead!

Trust in God should accompany, not take the place of, earnest effort.

The plot of the Jews whereby they expected to plunge their daggers into

Paul's body proved the means by which Paul was enabled to bear his witness in Rome. God does overrule.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

To Paul, in prison, brusied and depressed, keenly disappointed in the great hope of reconciling the Judean Christians, and keenly feeling the hatred of his own countrymen, there came in the night a word of divine approval and hope. "Be of good cheer," was the message, as he had testified for his Lord in Jerusalem, so should he in Rome.

Meanwhile the Jews had been planning how they could put Paul to death. Forty of them vowed that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him, and when day came they presented to the chief priests and the elders a monstrous conspiracy. The latter were to have the Sanhedrin ask Lysias to bring Paul before them again to judge his case, for the former trial had been interrupted, and these forty men would slay him on the way thither. To this the priests and elders seem to have readily agreed. The plot, however, became known in some way to Paul's nephew, who reported it at once to Paul in prison. Paul asked one of the centurions to take the young man to the chief captain, as he had something of importance to tell. Lysias led him aside for a private conference, and the youth told of the plot. Charging his informer to tell no one, Lysias dismissed him, and quickly carried out his plan to outwit the conspirators. At nine that evening Paul was provided with a horse and started off with an escort of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearsmen. He was being sent to Felix, the governor, at Cæsarea. All that night they travelled till Antipatris, thirty-five miles away, was reached; the danger from the assassins being over, the soldiers returned and the cavalry continued the journey with Paul to Cæsarea, and took him at once to the procurator's court. Felix read the letter which they had brought from Lysias, a cleverly constructed letter narrating that he had rescued the prisoner from rioters in the temple because he was a Roman, and informing the governor about the trial before the Sanhedrin where he had been found guilty of nothing worthy of the bonds or death, and stating that he had directed his accusers to appear before Felix. "From what province are you?" questioned the governor. "Cilicia," returned Paul. Telling him that he would hear his case when his accusers arrived, he ordered Paul kept in Herod's palace. Thus Paul is back again in Cæsarea within two weeks after Agabus had predicted his bonds, but he is of good cheer, he is certain of going to Rome.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Gospel of the Resurrection. 1 Cor. 10.1-16.24; 2 Cor. 4.1-5.21. Advanced Course.
2. The answer of the Sadducees to Paul's preaching of the resurrection—it is not fit that he should live. The need of open-mindedness toward divine revelations.
3. Modern Sicarii.
4. Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people, verse 5.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. What can you learn about Felix? 2. Why was he deposed? 3. What three things were brought against Paul by the Jews through Tertullus? (Acts 24. 1-9.) 4. Which verses of our lesson answer each of the charges? 5. When before had Paul been charged with disturbing the public peace? (Lessons II and III of last quarter.) 6. When before had he been charged with an offence against the religion of the Jews? (Acts 18.13.) 7. What were the similar charges made against Jesus? (Luke 23.2, 5.) 8. What beliefs did Paul and the Jews hold in common? (Verses 14, 15.) 9. What did he believe which the Jews did not, although proclaimed in their Scriptures? (Acts 26.22, 23.) 10. What had Paul said before the Sanhedrin about the testimony of his conscience to his life? (Acts 23.1.) 11. How does he explain this claim in 2 Cor. 1.12? 12. With Felix' manner of settling the matter contrast that of Gallio. (Acts 18.12-16.) 13. Who had told Paul that they would hear him again concerning the resurrection and judgment? (Lesson IV of last quarter.)

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LESSON III—OCTOBER 17

PAUL A PRISONER—BEFORE FELIX

Read Acts 24. Commit verses 25, 26.

Golden Text

Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always. Acts 24.16.

LESSON TEXT Acts 24.10-27

10 And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I cheerfully make my defence: 11 seeing that thou canst take knowledge that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem: 12 and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. 13 Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me. 14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets; 15 having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. 16 Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always. 17 Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings: 18 amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but *there were* certain Jews from Asia— 19 who ought to have been here before thee, and to make accusation, if they had aught against me. 20 Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, 21 except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day.

22 But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter. 23 And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him.

24 But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. 26 He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. 27 But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

10. *Forasmuch...many years a judge unto this nation.* Felix had been procurator of Judea for several years. Compare Jesus' words to Pilate, John 18. 34, and contrast Paul's courteous beginning with the fulsome flattery of Tertullus' words, verses 2-4.

11. *Not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem.* From Cæsarea. Compare Peter's similar way of stating that the time had been too short to admit of an accusation being true, Acts 2.15. A crime committed so recently, too, could easily be investigated.

12. An answer to the first part of the charge of Tertullus, verse 5. *Stirring*

up a crowd is the translation of a Greek phrase which literally means "making a stopping of a crowd." Paul had not stopped the passers-by and so collected a crowd.

14. An answer to the second part of the accusation in verse 5. *Believing all things which are according to the law and which are written in the prophets. The law and the prophets* stands for the Old Testament writings. Christianity, the Way, was not a new religion in Paul's mind, but a development of Judaism.

15. *Which these also themselves accept.* The nation as a whole believed with the Pharisees in the resurrection, but the sect of the Sadducees denied it.

16. *Herein.* Margin, *on this account.* Because of his belief in a resurrection and judgment.

17. *After some years.* His last visit, mentioned in Acts 18.22, was five years before. *To bring alms.* See Rom. 15.25, 26. *Offerings.* "We can readily understand that this word is simply an abbreviation for Paul's fuller account of the events of 21.26, 27, which Luke considers it unnecessary to repeat" (*Rackham*).

18. This answers the third charge, verse 6. *Amidst which.* Margin, *in presenting which* (the offerings). The dash at the end of the sentence shows that Paul in his excitement did not finish his speech.

20, 21. *When I stood before the council.* See Acts 23.1-9.

23. *His friends.* "Among them we are doubtless to reckon Luke and Aristarchus, who had come with him to Jerusalem, and both of whom accompanied him on his voyage to Rome; and Philip the evangelist and his family, who were resident in Cæsarea" (*Gloag*).

24. *Drusilla.* A daughter of Herod Agrippa I, whose death is narrated in Acts 12.20-23.—*The faith in Christ Jesus.* See Acts 20.21.

25. Paul's topics had reference to Felix' conduct: *righteousness*—Felix supposed he might perpetrate with impunity every kind of villiany, says Tacitus; *self-control*—Felix had induced Drusilla to leave her husband and marry him; *judgment to come*—for his murder of Jonathan the high priest and other sins. Compare John the Baptist's talks with Herod, Mark 6.14-20.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

14. *Believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets.* It is a wonder to some how Paul could say this. To be sure he preached that Gentiles could be saved without circumcision. He associated converted Jews and Gentiles in the church, thus making nothing of ceremonial distinctions. But to believe the Bible is something more than to believe its letter and sometimes something different. It is to believe what God intended by the letter. If the Scriptures taught circumcision and other ceremonies, Paul knew their intent and their limitations. He knew and defined the object of the Law (Gal. 3.24). He saw no antithesis between his teaching and that of Moses (Rom. 3.31; Gal 3.21). He looked on the Law with great reverence and called it glorious (2 Cor. 3.7). As to the prophets he believed them, for was he not convinced that they foretold the very Jesus whom he preached and the leading facts in His history, His death and resurrection? And how could Paul's accusers claim to believe these same prophets when they denied Him of whom they spoke? *James M. Stifler,* in *An Introduction to the Acts.*

22. *When Lysias shall come down.* Now, whether the captain was unwilling to come, or whether he got a broad hint not to hurry, is a question we need not trouble to decide. The fact remains that we have no trace of his visit during the two years of confinement at Cæsarea. What was the apostle doing all that time? We can not be certain that he wrote any epistles. Do you think he was fretting? Or mourning over his churches as he paced his prison? We may be absolutely certain he was doing nothing like that—he was growing and ripening in his own inward life. For twenty years he had been fighting, amid the excitement and stress of a glorious campaign. New views of Christ had been borne upon his heart; new aspects of the Gospel had arrested him. It wanted leisure now to focus everything, and God bestowed that leisure at Cæsarea. Compare the letters that were written after these years, with the letters we know were written before them. Note the richness and depth and glory of the later ones, their exaltation of the Lord Jesus

Christ; their fresh insistence upon spiritual union, their recognition of the possibilities of sainthood; their method of bringing the most majestic doctrines to bear on the common duties of every day—and you will see what these two years did for Paul. *G. H. Morrison,* in *Footsteps of the Flock.*

26. *He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul.* Several facts show clearly that, during the following four years, Paul had considerable command of money. Imprisonment and a long lawsuit are expensive. Felix hoped for a bribe, and a rich Roman official did not look for a small gift. Paul, therefore, wore the outward appearance of a man of means, like one in a position to bribe a Roman procurator. At Cæsarea he was confined in the palace of Herod; but he had to live, to maintain two attendants, and to keep up a respectable appearance. Many comforts, which are almost necessities, would be given by the guards, as long as they were kept in good humor, and it is expensive to keep guards in good humor. In Rome he was able to hire a lodging for himself and to live there, maintaining, of course, the soldier who guarded him. Where, then, was the money procured? Was it from new contributions collected in the churches? That seems most improbable, from their general poverty, from Paul's personal character and from the silence of Luke on the point. Luke himself was probably a man dependent on his profession for his livelihood. There seems no alternative except that Paul's hereditary property was used in these four years. As to the exact facts, we must remain in ignorance. If Paul hitherto voluntarily abstained from using his fortune he now found himself justified by the importance of the case in acting differently. If, on the other hand, he had for a time been disowned by his family, then either a reconciliation had been brought about during his danger, or through death property had come to him as legal heir. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *St. Paul the Traveller.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *He gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence.* He was not bound to fix any definite time for the trial, but might defer it at his own arbitrary pleasure; and he might also commit the prisoner at his discretion to any one of the several kinds of custody recognized by the Roman law. These were as follows:—First, confinement in the public jail (*custodia publica*), which was the most severe kind; the common jails throughout the Empire being dungeons of the worst description, where the prisoners were kept in chains, or even bound in positions of torture. Of this we have seen an example in the confinement of Paul and Silas at Philippi. Secondly, free custody (*custodia libera*), which was the mildest kind. Here the accused was committed to the charge of a magistrate or senator, who became responsible for his appearance on the day of trial; but this species of detention was only employed in the case of men of high rank. Thirdly, military custody (*custodia militaris*), which was introduced at the beginning of the Imperial régime. In this last custody the accused was given in charge to a soldier, who was responsible with his own life for the safe keeping of his prisoner. This was further secured by chaining the prisoner's right hand to the soldier's left. The soldiers, of course, relieved one another in this duty. Their prisoner was usually kept in their barracks, but sometimes allowed to reside in a private house under their charge. It was under this last species of custody that Paul was now placed by Felix. It is obvious that the centurion might render it more or less galling, according to his inclination, or the commands he had received. *F. W. Farrar,* in *The Life and Epistles of Paul.*

26. *He hoped that money would be given him of Paul.* To take bribes was in direct violation of the Roman law, but was in perfect accordance with the character of this unjust and avaricious judge. The Julian law, *De Repetundis,* expressly prohibited a judge from receiving anything for a person's imprisonment or liberation. Nor was Felix the only instance of a governor of Judea who was guilty of taking bribes. Albinus, one of his successors, on his departure from the province, freed all those prisoners who gave him money; "by which means" as Josephus remarks, "the prisons were indeed emptied, but the country was filled with robbers." *Paton J. Gloag,* in *Commentary on the Acts.*

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Lysias had charged Paul's accusers to speak against him before Felix, and they were prompt to do so. The high priest Ananias with a deputation from the Sanhedrin came to Cæsarea within five days. Paul was summoned for trial, and Tertullus, the advocate whom the Jews had engaged, presented their case against him. After words of flattery for Felix, expressing gratitude for his reforms, Tertullus accused the prisoner of three things: inciting disturbances among the Jews throughout the Roman Empire, an offence against the Roman law; being the leader of the sect of the Nazarenes, an offence against the law of Moses; and defiling the temple, an offence against both the law of Moses and the Roman law, since the latter protected the Jews in their worship. When Tertullus had finished the deputation of Jews emphatically endorsed all that he had said.

The trial was held and Paul was probably imprisoned in the Prætorium, or "Herod's Palace" at Cæsarea, soon after Pentecost of the year 56 A. D. See page 19. A building on the mole in Cæsarea is sometimes called "the prison of St. Paul", but it was probably erected by the crusaders.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In the ancient Greek and Roman courts it was customary to have a paid lawyer present a case, just as it is in courts of to-day. The lawyer on the side making a complaint against a prisoner began, then the lawyer for the prisoner replied. In this way each side was allowed two speeches, but the time of each was limited. We have heard in the Acts of many trials; in the trial of Paul before Felix at Cæsarea, we first hear of a paid lawyer. His name is Tertullus and he represents the Jews of Jerusalem who so fiercely hate Paul. You must begin your plea by praising the judge, was the rule in those days, and Tertullus does not forget this. What does he say of Felix? (Historical Background.)

For Older Pupils. When Agrippa I, King of Judea, died in 44 A. D., Judea was a Roman province, and its rulers, appointed by the Emperor, were called procurators. In 51 or later, the date is uncertain, Antonius Felix was appointed procurator. He had been born and brought up as the slave of Antonia, the mother of Claudius Cæsar, and is therefore called Antonius Felix, but because he received his freedom from Claudius he is sometimes called Claudius Felix. Felix "exercised the authority of a King with the spirit of a slave," says Tacitus in his History; and in his Annals he represents him as indulging in all kinds of cruelty and lawlessness. When Jonathan the high priest expostulated with him for his misrule, he had him assassinated in the temple by the Sicarrii. This is the man before whom Paul is now on trial, and the man by whom, Tertullus says, the Jews enjoy much peace and evils are corrected for this nation!

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I A Conscience Void of Offence

How Paul gained his Clear Conscience. Paul says that the aim of his life has been to have a conscience at peace with God and man. He has exercised himself to have such a conscience. He has sought to attain it by rigid self discipline. Our words *ascetic* and *exercise* come from the same Greek word, which means literally *to practice gymnastics*. Because he had been an ascetic, extremely rigid in self-denial, he could say that his conscience did not trouble him. Our word *conscience* comes from two Latin words that mean literally *knowing with*. I know nothing against myself, Paul says in 1 Cor. 4.4. His conscience did not accuse him of offence against God or men, in this matter whereof he was accused, and to have such a conscience in all matters was the aim ever before him.

Some Untroubled Consciences. That a conscience may be void of offence, not because its possessor never does wrong, but because it has become hardened, is shown in this story of Laura E. Richards, published in *The Silver Crown;*

The minister had just finished his great sermon. The air still quivered with his burning words, and the people sat erect, disturbed, embarrassed; yet still he lingered a moment in his place.

"Is there," he asked, "one here in whose breast these words strike like a barbed arrow, for the truth that is in them?" and he sat down.

"That was hard on John," said old James; "but he deserves it, every word."

"A blow from the shoulder for James," said old John; "time he got one, too, if it is not too late."

"I wonder if either of those two old sinners will take his medicine and be helped by it," said old William.

But the little saint, the little saint, hurried home, and knelt by her little bed, and cried aloud in her anguish: "My God, my God, have mercy on me, and give me for this stone a heart of flesh!"

Duty of Educating the Conscience. Some one has said that conscience is like a sun-dial, when the truth shines on it, it points the right way, but it may be covered up so that no truth can fall on it, or false light may fall on it, and then it leads one astray. The owner of the sun-dial must see that it receives the true light, and so must the owner of the conscience. Paul's conscience was void of offence toward God when as Saul the Pharisee he persecuted the Christians. "I verily thought with myself," he said, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." When he found that false light had been falling on his conscience he did not say that he would not trust it again, but he took the utmost pains to let the true light shine on it, and then he trusted its guidance implicitly.

"Men get embarrassed by the common cases of a misguided conscience," said Dr. Thomas Arnold in one of his letters, "but a compass may be out of order as well as a conscience, and the needle may point due south if you hold a powerful magnet in that direction. Still, the compass, generally speaking, is the true and sure guide, and so is the conscience; and you can trace the deranging influence on the latter quite as surely as on the former."

II The Peril of To-morrow

Two Men of Caesarea. Twice in this same city of Cæsarea was a man of God sent for, to explain about the faith in Christ Jesus, but wholly different were the two results. Cornelius sent for Peter, and when he had come the Roman centurion bade him speak "all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord." And when Peter had finished his message, Cornelius and those with him "magnified God." "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" questioned Peter, amazed and glad. Felix sent for Paul, and the Roman governor trembled as he listened, but he did not magnify God; he sent His messenger away and said he would call him again when he found a convenient season. The impression made on his guilty conscience was soon lost, and we do not hear that it ever returned. The convenient season came not. He decided his own fate when he fought against the impression and put the matter out of his mind.

The Heart may become Hardened. Every appeal to the conscience that is put aside makes the next appeal less likely to succeed. You fire a shell against an earthwork; that brings down the face of the earthwork and makes débris which guards the core of it against the next shell.

Every base choice makes subsequent noble choices less likely. Every time that a man is brought into contact with Jesus Christ, and fails to yield full obedience and trust, that man is less likely ever to yield. Something the giving of the sop to Judas did. If it did not melt, it hardened. There is no ice so tough, so slippery, as ice which is melted on the surface by the few hours of the winter's sun, and then locked again in the bonds of the frost when night falls. Half-melted hearts frozen again are frozen harder than ever. *Alexander Maclaren.*

To-morrow is No Time. To-morrow is the most wonderful of days, or, as Isaiah has it, "a day great beyond measure." It is the day when every man does his duty. It is the harvest time of good intentions. To-morrow bad habits will be resolutely overcome, evil tempers conquered. To-morrow countless numbers of people will heed the call of Christ. To-morrow they will fol-

low Him and they will give themselves wholly to His service, they will put forth unsparing effort, they will make willing and joyous sacrifices, they will stand boldly for the right though the heavens fall, they will ally themselves with the Christian Church, they will—but the vision enlarges itself beyond the power of expression. *George H. Hubbard.*

The Morrow may not be yours. One-fourth of the human race dies before reaching the seventh year, one-half before the seventeenth year. Out of one hundred persons only six live to be sixty years old. Out of five hundred only one lives to be eighty years old. Is it safe to put off deciding the greatest of all questions till a more convenient season?

One Sunday night in Chicago Dwight L. Moody chose for his text "What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" and his closing words to his immense congregation were: "I wish you would take this text home with you and turn it over in your minds during the week, and next Sunday we will decide what to do with Jesus of Nazareth." That night the great fire broke out and many of his audience perished. Mr. Moody never forgot the impression thus made upon him of the lost opportunity, and in all his work afterwards he never said, "We will decide next week," but rather "We must each decide now."

III Missionary Topic Neither can they prove the Things whereof they accuse me

A Modern Accusation not Proved. In 1907 a colporteur was arrested and convicted at Elvas, Portugal, on the charge of "selling false Bibles." They were Protestant Bibles, and the selling of them was judged a crime of disrespect to the State religion. The British and Foreign Bible Society, for which the man was working, carried the case to the Lisbon Court of Appeal, where the decision was reversed. The higher court declared that the so-called Protestant Bible contains no passage that is not found textually in the Catholic Bible, and that the Constitutional Charter granted permission for Protestant worship in Portugal. It seems strange to read of the arrest and conviction of a man in a civilized European state at the present day, on a charge of serving God after the Way which was not the way of the national religion. The charges made against Paul have been repeated against Christians down through all the ages.

Ye ken Naething aboot it. The work of missionaries has been greatly hindered, not only by persecutions from the people for whom they have been working, but also by false charges and criticism by the "home churches." Livingstone felt the injustice of such charges and gave the reason why they were made. "We are working hard," he wrote in a letter to his mother, "at what some can see at a glance the importance of, while to others we appear following after the glory of discovering lakes, mountains, jenny-nettles and puddock-stools. In reference to these people I always remember a story told me by the late Dr. Phillip with great glee. When a young minister in Aberdeen, he visited an old woman in affliction, and began to talk very fair to her on the duty of resignation, trusting, hoping, and all the rest of it, when the old woman looked up into his face and said, 'Peer thing, ye ken naething aboot it.' This is just what I say to those who set themselves up to judge another man's servant."

The Charges that Missionaries are Inferior People. There is a notion that foreign missionaries are generally men of inferior caliber. Prejudice, this notion is, but, like all prejudice, it has some cause. As one corrupt politician will do more to bring politics into disrepute than a dozen honest ones can do to redeem it; as one pettifogger can do more to give an evil reputation to the legal profession than a score of high-minded lawyers can do to efface that impression; so one unculivated, unvigorous, sentimental, narrow-minded man in the missionary service can bring that service into a disrepute, and produce an impression of inefficiency that a score of broad-minded statesmanlike men can not counteract. *Lyman Abbot,* in *The Outlook.*

I have investigated the criticisms of missionaries wherever possible, and am bound to say that, as a whole, these men and women are of a higher grade even than the ministry at home, and to say that their converts are not genuine is simply to betray a lack of knowledge or a surplus of prejudice. *W. T. Ellis.*

The Charge that Missionaries live in Luxury. It is to be hoped that the coarse and shallow criticisms which from time to time have gained circulation in America touching the ease and luxury of missionary households henceforth may be discredited. After having been permitted to sojourn in the homes of scores of missionaries in all parts of India, in Ceylon, and in Japan, it is an honor to testify that there has been observed only that which illustrates good sense, the consecrated use of opportunity, and wise and helpful self-adjustment to the environment. *Charles Cuthbert Hall.*

Come and See. Beginning with a prejudice against the work of the missionaries, I was driven by the force of facts and experience to the opinion that the mission has been the strongest as well as the most beneficent influence in causing the movement toward civilization. *W. M. Ramsay.*

I had conceived a great prejudice against missions in the South Seas, but I had no sooner come there than that prejudice was at first reduced, and at last annihilated. Those who condemn missionaries have only one thing to do; to come and see them on the spot. *Robert Louis Stephenson.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Any time is no time. *Proverb.*

He's armed without that's innocent within. *Pope.*

Dawn does not come twice to awaken a man. *African Proverb.*

Fear is not faith, but it may lead to faith, or it may lead to hardening. *Alexander Maclaren.*

A true life is marked by positive action, not by prudent suspense. *Phillips Brooks.*

Conscience is the power to feel the right and the way, with a sense of responsibility, both before and after conduct. *Olin A. Curtis.*

The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba'
Has aye some cause to smile. *Burns.*

Not to resolve to be is to resolve not to be. *Alexander Maclaren.*

Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. Joshua 24.15.

How long halt ye between two opinions? 1 Kgs. 18.21.

Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Isa. 55.6.

Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor. 6.2.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

I believe in the resurrection both of the just and unjust, said Paul, and on this account I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence. Are our beliefs as real and living to us as were Paul's? Does our belief in the resurrection and the judgment affect our every-day life?

A conscience may be at peace because its owner has exercised himself to attain peace, or it may be undisturbed because it has been neglected and become hardened.

To-day has two great enemies, as some one has said, the one is westerday, and the other is to-morrow. Felix' day was troubled by his sins of yesterday and ruined by his "convenient season" of the to-morrow. Felix was conscience-stricken, but not penitent. He knew that Paul was innocent, but from motives of self-interest he kept him in prison. Could any of these sins of Felix be attributed to us?

It is a solemn thing to say to-morrow when God says to-day, for man's to-morrow and God's to-day never meet, says Duncan Mathieson. The word that comes from the eternal throne is "now" and it is a man's own choice that fixes his doom. Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.

PAUL A PRISONER—BEFORE FELIX

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Felix made a gesture signifying that Paul should make his defence, and Paul with calm dignity answered the charges. He began in a respectful manner, saying that he spoke with greater confidence because Felix was well acquainted with the state of affairs in his nation. That he was a disturber of the public peace he denied; it had been but twelve days since he came to Jerusalem for the very opposite purpose of worshipping there, investigation could be made and no proof of his enemies' charge could be found. That he belonged to the so-called sect of the Nazarenes he acknowledged, but he was not an apostate from the Jewish religion, for he served the same God, believed the law and the prophets, and believed in the resurrection of the just and unjust as did these Jews before him, and because of this belief he strove to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men. The charge of defiling the temple he denied; his purpose in going to Jerusalem had been to bring alms to his nation and offerings, and his enemies had found him carrying out a Jewish rite in the temple, with no crowd nor tumult, but there were certain Jews from Asia—enemies who ought to be here to make accusation if they found aught against him. Or let these men who are present say of what wrong-doing he was found guilty in the trial before the Council. It was because he had affirmed the resurrection of the dead that he was arraigned this day before the governor.

Felix, having for a Roman a good knowledge of Christianity, saw that Paul was hated because he was a Christian, but he would not pronounce him innocent. He adjourned the trial, his pretext for not settling the matter being that he would await the coming of Lysias. He ordered the centurion to keep Paul a prisoner, but to grant him the privilege of seeing his friends and having them minister unto him.

Later, Felix sent for Paul to have him tell him and his wife Drusilla about the faith in Christ Jesus. Paul talked to him so effectively about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come that Felix trembled and sent him away, saying that when more convenient he would hear him again. Though Felix often sent for him after that, it was with the hope that Paul would bribe him to gain his freedom. Two years passed, and Felix was succeeded in office by Porcius Festus, but he left Paul in prison for the sake of gaining favor with the Jews.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Were belief in the resurrection and judgment taken away, to what extent would this be a moral world?
2. The courage of innocence.
3. The public conscience.
4. The missionary and his critic. See article by A. J. Brown in the *Missionary Review of the World,* April and May, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Why was Paul asked to defend himself before Agrippa? (25.26, 27.) 2. When before had a ruler of Judea sought to shift responsibility by having a Herod examine his prisoner? (Luke 23.7-12.) 3. Write Paul's entire speech in your own words. 4. What did Paul say was the real cause of the enmity of the Jews? (Verses 20, 21.) 5. What was Paul's commission? (Verses 16-18.) 6. What did he preach? (Verses 20, 22, 23.) 7. What impression did Paul's speech make on Festus? (Verse 24.) 8. On Agrippa? (Verse 28.) 9. When was Jesus accused of being mad? (Mark 3.21; John 10.20.) 10. How are Agrippa's words in verse 28 given in the two versions? 11. Why did Paul appeal to Cæsar? (Acts 25.9-11.) 12. How many times did Pilate declare Jesus guiltless of the charge made by the Jews? (Luke 23.4, 14, 22.) 13. By whom was Paul declared innocent of the charges against him? (Acts 23.29; 25.25; 26.31, 32.) 14. Why did not each one acquit him? (Acts 24.27; 25.9; 26.32.)

PAUL A PRISONER—BEFORE FESTUS AND AGRIPPA

Read Acts 25.6-12 and chapter 26. Commit verses 26, 27-29

Golden Text

I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day. 2 Tim. 1.12.

LESSON TEXT Acts 26.19-32

19 Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: 20 but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. 21 For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. 22 Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; 23 how that the Christ must suffer, *and* how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad. 25 But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. 26 For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. 28 And Agrippa *said* unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. 29 And Paul *said*, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: 31 and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 32 And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

19. *King Agrippa.* Herod Agrippa II, ruler of some principalities in northern Palestine, with the title of King; son of Herod Agrippa I who slew James the son of Zebedee; great nephew of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist; great grandson of Herod the Great, who massacred the innocents in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus. He was made supervisor of the temple at Jerusalem and had the privilege of appointing its high priest. When the last Jewish war broke out with the Romans he received into his territory and protected those who fled before the siege of Titus began.

20. *That they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.* "It may be that Paul put the message of the gospel in a form like that delivered by John the Baptist, in order to attract and arrest a member of the family of the Herods" (*Lindsay*). See Luke 3.8-14.

21. *For this cause.* It was the preaching of Paul to the Gentiles that had aroused the jealousy of the Jews.

22. *I stand unto this day.* See Eph. 6.13.—*Saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come. The prophets and Moses* stood for

the Old Testament Scriptures. For prophecies see Isa. 9.2; 42.6; 49.9; 60.1-3; 62.16.

23. *How that the Christ must suffer.* This was a stumbling block to the Jews.—*By the resurrection of the dead.* See 2 Tim. 1.10. "We should have expected *by His* resurrection from the dead: but the expression shows how Paul identified in his own mind the resurrection of Christ, the first fruits, with the resurrection of them that are His, 1 Cor. 15.20-23" (*Rackham*).—*To the people.* The Jews.

24. *Thou art mad; much learning is turning thee mad.* "Paul, you are a great philosopher, but you have no common sense" (*Ramsay*). See 2 Cor. 5.13.

26. *These things.* The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.—*This hath not been done in a corner.* A figurative way of speaking, the opposite of "proclaimed upon the housetops", Luke 12.3.

27. *With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian.* Agrippa's words thus translated sound contemptuous, though they may have been only "a piece of raillery." "Agrippa's saying is a well-known crux. It is certainly not to be taken in a serious sense, as in the A. V.,—almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian—for nowhere else is *almost* the equivalent of the Greek words used here,—*in a little.* This phrase usually means *in a little time;* but if it is so taken here, the correspondence in St. Paul's answer—in little and in great, which can not apply to time—will be less exact. Probably it takes its complexion from the verb, as in the R. V.,—*with but little persuasion or effort*" (*Rackham*).

29, 30. See the A. V.—*Bernice.* A sister of Agrippa and of Drusilla, the wife of Felix.—*They that sat with them.* See Acts 25.23.

32. *If he had not appealed unto Cæsar.* See Acts 25.9-12; 28.19. The Cæsar was Nero.

SUGGESTIVE WORDS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

20. *Throughout all the country of Judæa.* There is no record elsewhere of this preaching. His ministry "at Jerusalem" had been very brief (Acts 9.28-30; Gal. 1.18). Such omissions in our record show that it is complete only in the point of giving a history of the development of the Church. Whatever facts do not serve to show this development are not admitted to this treatise. *J. M. Stifler,* in *Introduction to the Acts.*

26. *This hath not been done in a corner.* Never before has the life of Christ been so scrutinized in every detail, and yet we can welcome such scrutiny and investigation, because we remember that we are not dealing with some prehistoric or mythic period, but with a province of the Roman empire, its government, and its procedure, and because we can test the New Testament records in the light of all that we have learned to know of Jewish expectancy and hope. *R. J. Knowling,* in *The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ.*

28. *Thou wouldest fain make me a Christian.* He is half amused and half angry at the apostle's presumption in supposing that so easily, or so quickly, he was going to land his fish. "It is a more difficult task than you fancy, Paul, to make a Christian of a man like me". That is the real meaning of his words. And I think that rightly understood, they yield lessons of no less value than those that have been so often drawn from them, as they appear in our Authorized Version. Mark the contrast, for instance, between him and the bluff Roman official at his side. To Festus, Paul's talking about a dead man's having risen, and a risen Jew becoming a light to all nations, was such utter nonsense that with characteristic Roman contempt for men with ideas, he breaks in with his rough, strident voice, "Much learning has made thee mad". There was not much chance of that cause producing that effect on Festus. But he was, apparently, utterly bewildered at this entirely novel and unintelligible sort of talk. Agrippa, on the other hand, knows all about it, has heard that there was such a thing, and has a general, rough notion of what Paul believed, as a Christian. And was he any better for it? No! He was a great deal worse. It took the edge off a good deal of his curiosity. It made him fancy that he knew beforehand all that the apostle had to say. It stood in the way of his apprehending the truths which he vainly thought that he understood.

And although the world knows a great deal more about Jesus Christ and the Gospel than he did, the very same thing is true abount hundreds and thousands of people who have all their lives long been brought into contact with Christianity. Superficial knowledge is the worst enemy of accurate knowledge. For the first condition of knowing a thing is to know that we do not know it. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Christ's Musts.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *The Christ must suffer.* In the margin of the Revised Version it reads, the Christ *is subject to suffering.* The marginal reading is nearer the meaning given by the Jews to the prophecies; they contended that the prophets merely declared the Christ *liable to suffering.* They believed only in a victorious Christ, and the sufferings of Jesus were to them a "stumbling-block".

24. *Paul, thou art mad.* Thou are mad—if thou dost not think as I do! This has been the charge in all countries and all ages, and enthusiasts especially have always been subject to this accusation. Early in Christ's ministry His friends went out to lay hold on Him: for they said, He is beside himself. And the scribes that came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons. After He had given sight to the blind man many of the Jews said, He hath a demon, and is mad, why hear ye him? Others said, these are not the sayings of one possessed with a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? "But we must also remember that in the ancient world madness was closely associated with inspiration; a madman was supposed to be possessed by some supernatural power and was looked upon with awe. Festus must have had some such feeling. The mention of Moses and the prophets suggested to him that through excessive study of Jewish lore the apostle had become possessed of a religious frenzy."

Nero, the Cæsar to whom Paul Appealed.

32. *If he had not appealed unto Cæsar.* Though Jews had appealed against Roman officials, this was the first time a Jew had appealed to the highest court of the realm against other Jews. The words *Cæsarem appello,* I appeal to Cæsar, stopped all proceedings in a provincial court. Unless the prisoner had been proved guilty of brigandage or sedition, the provincial governor had no choice in the matter, the prisoner must be sent on to Rome for trial. Meanwhile he must be well treated, as if uncondemned. Professor Ramsay points out that there has always been one law for the rich man and another for the poor in the sense that many claims can be successfully pushed by a rich man in which a poor man would have no chance of success, and his opinion is that the citizen's right of appeal to the Emperor was hedged in by fees and pledges, so that Paul was choosing an expensive line of trial.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

As soon as Festus came to Jerusalem on succeeding Felix in the government of Judea, the chief priests and leading Jews asked him as a favor to have Paul sent down from Jerusalem to be judged by them, purposing to kill him on the way. Festus, however, said that he was going shortly to Cæsarea, and they could come there and make their charges. Within a few days Festus reached Cæsarea, sent for Paul, and the Jews from Jerusalem made their charges which they could not prove, Paul declaring, as he had before Felix, that neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against

Cæsar had he sinned. But when Festus for the sake of gaining the favor of the Jews asked him if he would go to Jerusalem to be judged there before him, Paul, knowing full well what judgment he would receive in this event, boldly declared that he appealed to Cæsar. After hastily conferring with the council, Festus made the only reply he could make in this emergency, Unto Cæsar shalt thou go. Before Paul could be sent to Rome, Agrippa, and his sister Bernice came to greet the new governor of Judea. Festus reported Paul's case to him, and Agrippa expressed a desire to hear Paul. The next day Paul was summoned to appear before Agrippa and Bernice, Festus, and the chief men of the city. Festus declared before them all that he had not found Paul worthy of death, but he wished Agrippa to examine Paul in order to learn himself what charges against him he should make in his letter to the emperor. Agrippa told Paul to speak for himself, and Paul then made his famous defence, which is the subject of our lesson.

The place is the "place of hearing" in Cæsarea; the time soon after the coming of Festus as governor of Judea.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What is going on in the city of Cæsarea? Toward the audience chamber of the Roman governor a great crowd is hastening. Let us enter with them. Here comes Festus, the governor, and with him are King Agrippa and the princess Bernice, all resplendent in royal robes. Festus is clad in scarlet, Agrippa in royal purple, a golden circlet about his forehead, and Bernice flashes with jewels. The chief captains and the retinue of soldiers follow, their helmets and coats of mail and shields and spears glittering, and take their stand behind the gilded chairs where sit the governor and his distinguished guests. After them come all the chief citizens of the city. Soon afterwards a man is led in chained to two soldiers, and all eyes are turned upon him. Festus states who the prisoner is, what the charges are against him, his opinion that he is innocent, and his wish to learn from an examination before the king what he shall write to the great Roman emperor to whom the prisoner has asked to be sent for trial. King Agrippa stretches forth his hand in sign that the prisoner shall speak, and Paul makes his great defence of his life and conduct. (By questions based on pupil's remembrance of lesson IV, second quarter, bring before the class the main points of the first part of Paul's speech.)

For Older Pupils. The twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts is one of the twenty-six chapters of the Bible which Ruskin's mother had him commit to memory, whereby, as Ruskin says, she established his soul in righteousness. It is well worth being learned by heart, for it contains the finest address in the Acts, the best account we have of the great apostle's relation to his mission, and in its dignity, sincerity, skill, and persuasiveness it proves the power of the gospel to "turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God." It is called Paul's *apologia pro vita sua*, his defence of his life, but the apostle is not pleading in fear for his life; he shows, indeed, that he is not a criminal, that he has done nothing worthy of death, but he does so in defending Christianity as being, not contrary to earlier divine revelation, but a fulfillment of that revelation, a culmination of all past promises.

Note the perfect courtesy with which he begins his speech; a courtesy never once lost, not even when Festus calls him crazy or when Agrippa speaks to him so contemptuously that we can almost see the smile on the faces of those who listen to his scornful jest.

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Not Disobedient unto the Heavenly Vision

With the Vision came the Duty. When Paul had that wonderful vision on his way to Damascus that utterly changed his life, it was revealed to him that responsibility went with the privilege. To this end have I appeared unto thee—Paul gives the word he heard—to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will

appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. Wherefore, O King Agrippa, Paul joyously added, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Well might he say this, he who "determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified", whose object in living was to "preach Christ crucified"!

In earlier lessons this year we saw Peter given a vision on the housetop at Joppa and then obeying it by going to Cæsarea to preach Christ to Cornelius and baptize him; and Philip directed by an angel to the desert road toward Gaza and obeying the vision by going at once and explaining there the word of God to the Ethiopian. To the shepherds watching their flocks in the fields near Bethlehem came the vision and song of the angelic host, and they obeyed by going in haste to find the Babe and making known concerning the saying that was spoken to them about this Child; to the magi came the vision of the star which they followed till it stood over where the young Child was and they came into the house and fell down and worshipped Him. Visions are given for a purpose, they are commands to be obeyed.

Blessed is he who is Obedient. Luther saw a vision of a church free from corrupt ecclesiasticism, of every man going to the original fountain for his spiritual drink, of every man worshipping according to the dictates of his own conscience. The dream, the vision, the inspiration of religious freedom swept over his soul and he defied crowned heads, and mitered heads and the very powers of the air, so intent was he on being obedient to that vision which had enlightened him, rejoiced him, and now controlled all his splendid manhood and commanding genius.

Hundreds are toiling to-day for reforms that seem well nigh hopeless, because they must. A vision of duty is ever with them. A vision of the world's wants and pain and sorrow haunts them. God has revealed to many a man that he must help to make the world better. Blessed is he, if he is obedient. Woe, woe to him if he is disobedient to the vision.

You have had visions! Deny it not! To your soul there was revealed something far better than the present condition. You saw where you might serve men and serve God. You saw where your own life might be purified and your character enobled. Every nerve of your nobler self was set vibrating like the strings of the Eolian harp when the wind sweeps over it. Perhaps you were alone when the vision came, and you forgot it when you passed out among men. Perhaps you were sitting in church, and as the preacher spoke of duty, of possibility, of responsibility, of reward, the vision flashed before you and you said, "Yes, Lord, I will", and the vision passed away again when you went home and began to bicker about the trifles of life. Oh, what visions have come! but you were disobedient to them. Condensed from an article by *Myron W. Haynes,* in the *Homiletic Review.*

II A Great Conviction

The Meaning of Our Golden Text. The words are taken from Paul's second letter to Timothy. After speaking of the "unfeigned faith" that was Timothy's, and exhorting him to "stir up the gift of God" which was in him, Paul refers to his own sufferings endured for the cause he loved, and adds, "yet I am not ashamed, for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day." During the last illness of Dr. Alexander, of Princeton, he repeated these words, and referring to the frequent misquotation—I know in whom I have believed—said that he could not allow even a preposition to stand between himself and Christ, the direct object of his faith. Dr. G. H. Knight in "The Master's Questions to His Disciples" very forcibly shows Paul's full meaning in these words:—"Paul did not say *I know that I have trusted Him;* he said *I know Him* on whom my trust reposes; *I know His character to be the infinitely trustworthy one;* and this was a thing that could never need reconsideration. It was a settled matter. I know whom I *have* believed; not, I know one whom I *may* trust, as soon as necessity arises; nor, I know one

I *will* trust when things come to the worst; nor, I know one whom I *must* trust as my last resource, when all others fail; but I know Him to whom I have already surrendered my trust, whom I have trusted once for all, and who will keep me safe for ever. I trust Him *because I know Him.* I *know* Him to be one who will never go back upon His word."

Paul's intensely earnest address before Agrippa is tremulous with his great personal conviction that he knows Jesus the Christ, and so are all his works and words. We use the word *know* very lightly—we speak of knowing a person with whom we have a bowing rather than a speaking acquaintance—but such a shallow meaning is not to be given to the word in the Bible.

How to have Paul's Conviction. At other times I preached with strenuous zeal the superiority of the Christian religion, and dilated on its early triumphs. This pleased my hearers, for it always flatters men to find themselves upon the winning side. What I wonder at now is that they did not perceive that my zeal to prove Christianity true was exactly proportioned to my fear that it was false. Men do not seek to prove that of which they are assured. Jesus never sought to prove the existence of a God because He was assured of it; He simply asserted and commanded. In my heart of hearts I knew that I was not sure. But I did not easily discover the reason for my uncertainty. I supposed the source to be the destructive criticism of the Gospels which had reduced Jesus Himself to a probability. In my private thought I argued that it was no longer possible to feel the intense reality of Christ. Francis might feel it, Catherine might feel it, because they lived in an atmosphere of poetry unchilled by criticism. But how could I attain to their faith? What could give back to a modern man, tortured by a thousand perplexities of knowledge of which they never dreamed, the reality of Christ which they possessed? And then the answer came—not suddenly, but as a still small voice slowly growing louder, more positive, more intense—Live the Life. Try to do some, at least, of the things that Jesus did. Seek through experience what can never come through ratiocination. Be a Francis; then it may be thou shalt think like him, and know Jesus as he knew Him. Live the Life—there is no other way.

Simple and far from novel as the answer seems, yet it came to me with the authority of a revelation. It illumined the entire circumference of my life. I could no longer hesitate: Jesus had never spoken from the Syrian heavens more surely to the heart of Saul of Tarsus than He had to me. And in the moment that He spoke, I also, like Saul, found all my feelings altered, altered incredibly, miraculously, so that I scarcely recognized myself.

There is no sense of unreality in religion now for me. There are no weary uncertainties, no melancholy sense of beating the air in what I teach. He who will try to live the life of Jesus for a single day, and in such few particulars as may lie within his scope, will at once realize the presence of Jesus with him. Condensed from a chapter in *The Empire of Love* by *Dr. W. J. Dawson.*

III Missionary Topic Such as I am

Was Paul Self-assertive? Renan calls Paul proud, unbending, self-assertive. Many of his words, taken by themselves without the context in which they belong, do sound self-assertive and self-righteous. But if we consider the causes that led to the self-assertions, we find them justifiable and necessary. I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles, he wrote the Corinthians. Does this sound egotistical? But he is not boasting of himself, he is trying to clear himself of the charges made to the Corinthians that their leader was a second-rate apostle, and he is doing this that his message may have full force as coming from one who knew whereof he spoke. At a fitting time he declares himself the chiefest of sinners, but that time is not now. I would that not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds, is his lofty, courteous reply to King Agrippa's jest. Agrippa's worldly position with all its pomp and splendor was as naught compared with Paul's spiritual knowledge and perfect trust, and well might he wish for others this same great peace and hope that was his.

Missionaries must be Alpine Guides. The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace

shall be with you (Phil. 4.9). Happy is the preacher who is not afraid of the hearer turning from the message to the messenger! I looked at a florist's shop the other day and I saw a great many packets of seeds. In the middle of the window there was an equisitely beautiful plant in flower, and attached to it were these words, "Grown from our seed". I say thrice blessed is the minister of God who, when he has been commending the seed of the Word, can point to an evident experience as confirmation of its power and grace. And thrice miserable are those servants of God whose speech is utterly belied by their life. Now the apostle Paul is bold enough to ask his readers to examine the word and works of grace in his own life. There is no unworthy conceit in the challenge. He made no profession to be perfect. But he does claim that the Lord has worked miracles in his own life, and that the signs of the miracles are open to the common eye. Why should he not make his boast in the Lord?

The apostle was perfectly sure of the trend of his own life. There is no rude pride in a man's declaration that he is "marching to Zion". He may slip and even fall, but he will fall with his face to the light. Paul did not speak in whispers; "I hope I am following the Saviour." He spoke in terms of perfect assurance, and his confidence acted like a splendid contagion. It would never do for an Alpine guide to pause and hesitate, and speak in stammers concerning his knowledge of the road. He must step out quietly and confidently in order that the others may follow confidently in his steps. Paul was just an Alpine guide into the hill country of the Eernal God! *J. H. Jowett,* in *Record of Christian Work.*

Some Heathen Christians. Of the native Christians whom he met in India, Julian Hawthorne said: "Those that I saw are a remarkable and impressive body of men and women. I am always saying to myself, 'They are like the people of the Bible.'" This might with equal truth be said of the Chinese Christians. Very many of them are like the people of the Bible in their simplicity, earnestness and faith. To these the words of our Lord appeal with the force of overwhelming certainty. How true this is appears from the following incident, which comes from Manchuria: "In one place a man was found unable to leave his bed, having been beaten nigh to death because he had followed the new faith, but he said to Mr. Douglass, Is it not enough for the disciple, pastor, to be like his Master?' One of this man's daughters came forward for baptism; she was asked, 'What if you should have to suffer like your father?' and her quick reply was, 'Has not our Lord said, Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven?' When converts are made of such stuff as this, it is no wonder that the kingdom advances." *Current Anecdotes.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Ideals are the word of God. *Mazzini.*

Visions are multiplied when souls are upon their knees. *J. H. Jowett.*

Act so that your conduct may be a law for all men under similar conditions. *Kant.*

The knowledge of one man is of more authority than the ignorance of several men. *Alexander McKenzie.*

It is one thing to believe, but another thing for a man only to imagine that he believes. *Des Cartes.*

To know music you must be musical; to know art you must be artistic; to know Christ you must be Christlike. *J. H. Jowett.*

Mighty purposes are born of mighty convictions, and not otherwise. *Henry Churchill King.*

I know of nothing that will give men the like power and strength that the knowledge of God in Christ will. *Oliver Cromwell.*

By the grace of God I am what I am. 1 Cor. 15.10.

Take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Eph. 6.13.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar,

1 John 2.4. He that loveth not, knoweth not God. 1 John 4.8. Measured by these statements, do you know Jesus Christ as Paul knew him?

This is the counsel of Dr. Henry Van Dyke: To be sure of God, most wise, most mighty, most holy, most loving, our Father in heaven and on earth; to be sure of Christ, divine and human, our Brother and our Master, the Pattern of excellence and the Redeemer from sin, the Saviour of all who trust in Him; to be sure of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Guide, the Purifier, given to all who ask for Him; to be sure of immortality and endless life in which nothing can separate us from the love of God,—let us consecrate our faith upon those things.

Much of what Paul said was wholly unintelligible to Festus, and when he declared that the One whom the Romans had crucified was risen from the dead, and was become a light to the Romans, he could not keep silence, but declared Paul crazy, his intellect disordered by too much study. It is common in these days for men to declare one whom they do not understand, or whose opinions differ from theirs, a visionary enthusiast, or a crazy fellow.

Our visions are our ideals. Let us idealize our lives, and actualize our ideals.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Paul began his defence not only of himself but of the gospel, before Agrippa and Festus and a notable gathering of prominent men, by courteously referring to Agrippa's knowledge of Jewish questions and customs, and then he told of his life as a Pharisee, his persecution of the Christians, his conversion and his commission to preach to the Gentiles. To the heavenly vision granted him on the way to Damascus he had been obedient and had faithfully carried out the command then received, by preaching at Damascus, at Jerusalem, and throughout Judea and to the Gentiles that all must repent and turn to God and do works worthy of repentance. Because of his preaching the Jews had seized him in the temple and tried to kill him. But God had helped him, and he had continued to testify to all what the prophets and Moses had foretold, a suffering and a risen Christ, the light unto all the world, Jews and Gentiles alike.

Festus interrupted Paul's impassioned words by boldly declaring him crazy. Courteously Paul replied that he was speaking words of truth and soberness, and turning to King Agrippa, he appealed to him as one who had knowledge of these things that had been notorious and who believed the prophets. Disdainfully Agrippa answered him—Thou thinkest with a little persuasion to make *me* a Christian! Paul nobly replied that he wished that not only Agrippa but all present, whether through much persuasion or little, might become a Christian like himself—his chains excepted. This ended the session. The king and the governor and the rest withdrew, and after acknowledging that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or of imprisonment, Agrippa told Festus that he could not free his prisoner because of the appeal to Cæsar which took the case out of their hands.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Festus as a type of some modern men in place of power, desiring on the whole to be just, but swayed from justice by the personal equation.
2. Experience the only answer to skepticism.
3. The attractive power of Christian Science is largely due to the fact that its adherents really believe what they claim to believe.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Describe the voyage to Fair Havens. (Acts 27.1-8.) 2. Who were Paul's traveling companions? (v. 2.) 3. How did the centurion treat his prisoner? (v. 3.) 4. What was Paul's counsel at Fair Havens and why was it disregarded? (vv. 9-12.) 5. How many times did Paul give advice on this voyage? (vv. 10, 21-26, 31, 33-35.) 6. Why did he remind the rest that if they had listened to his first advice it would have been well? 7. Why were the sailors troubled because they could see neither sun nor stars? 2. When did the compass come into use in European waters? 9. Read Psa. 107.23-32.

LESSON V—OCTOBER 31

PAUL A PRISONER—THE VOYAGE

Read Acts 17.1-26. Commit verses 22-24.

Golden Text

Commit thy way unto Jehovah, trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass. Psalm 37.5.

LESSON TEXT Acts 27.13-26

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore. 14 But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo: 15 and when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way *to it*, and were driven. 16 And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat: 17 and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, under-girding the ship; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven. 18 And as we labored exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw *the freight* overboard; 19 and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship. 20 And when neither sun nor stars shone upon *us* for many days, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away. 21 And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, 24 saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar; and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. 26 But we must be cast upon a certain island.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

13. *Supposing they had accomplished their purpose.* See verse 12. Phœnix was only thirty-four miles away, the wind was favorable, and they thought they could accomplish the journey.—*They weighed anchor.* A. V., *loosing them.* "Literally, *having taken up.* It is a nautical phrase for weighing anchor" (*Vincent.*)—*Close in shore.*" The wind was from the south.

14. *From it.* From the mountains of Crete.—*Tempestuous wind.* "Literally, a typhonic wind. The word means a typhoon" (*Vincent*). "The sudden blasts of the Mediterranean produce a vortex which is called a typhoon" (*Pliny*).—*Euraquilo.* "A northeaster. Between Eurus, the E. S. E. wind, and Aquilo, the north wind, hence E. N. E." (*Vincent*). "Southerly winds almost invariably shift to a violent northerly wind."

15. *Could not face the wind.* Literally, *not being able to look the wind in the face.* On some ancient ships, as the illustration on page 398 shows, an eye was painted on each side of the prow.

16. *Cauda.* Margin, and A. V., *Clauda.*—The small boat attached to the stern by a rope, which was in danger of being swept away or dashed in pieces against the side of the ship. See verse 30.

17. *They used helps, under-girding the ship.* Much as a weak trunk is

frapped (to use the nautical term) with ropes to make it withstand the storm of the baggage-man's fury, ancient ships were *frapped* by passing *helps,* ropes and chains, around the hull to prevent the ship's timbers from starting under the strain of a tempest.—*The Syrtis.* A. V., *the quicksands.* The sandbanks off the African coast, toward which the wind was blowing them.—*They lowered the gear.* A. V., *strake sail.* What the Greek word σκεῦος means here is uncertain. It is the same word that is translated *great sheet* in Acts 10.11. Mr. Rackham suggests that it may mean the gear or the main yard-arm, but thinks Dr. Breusing's interpretation more probable. "He has shown that it was the custom for the ancients in a storm to lower cables, with weights or anchors attached, into the sea, in order to retard the vessel: and σκεῦος means such a weight or anchor, only to be used in the last extremity. To retard the vessel was the present need: and this is the way the Bezan text understands it—*they lowered a weight to drag.* The sails would have been reefed before now, as the Bezan text, in fact, states in verse 15".

An Ancient Ship, Showing Main Mast with Sail Reefed, Foresail, and Rudders. From Rosse's Roma Sotteranea.

18. A. V., *And we being exceeding tossed with a tempest.—To throw the freight overboard. The freight* is printed in italics to show that it is not in the Greek. The verb means literally, *they made a casting out.* See verse 38 and Jonah 1.5.

19. *The tackling.* Margin, *furniture.* Smith suggests that it was the main-yard that went overboard, which would greatly lighten the ship; others suggest the tables, chests, and everything moveable aboard.

20. *Neither sun nor stars shone.* They relied on these to make their reckoning, as there was no compass in those days and they were beyond sight of land. —*Many days.* Fourteen days were spent between leaving Crete and reaching Malta.

21. *Ye should have hearkened unto me.* See verse 10. Paul's words sound like "I told you so," but he is not taunting them nor boasting of his superior knowledge; he reminds them of his earlier warning in order to more readily persuade them to follow his present counsel.

24. *Thou must stand before Cæsar.* See Acts 23.11.—*God hath granted thee.* The inference is that their lives were granted Paul in answer to ¹ is prayer. Compare Gen. 18.23-33.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

18. *We labored with the storm.* The fury of the great deep is appalling, but the genius of man has gone a long way toward robbing it of its terrors; the loneliness of the sea is at times oppressive to the imagination, but the will of man has made him at home when no sail is in sight and thousands of restless miles lie between him and the land. The sea becomes as friendly as the land when men come to understand its conditions and to put themselves into harmony with it. It is God's in precisely the same sense in which the earth is His, "for He made it," and what God has made is for man's use, safety and growth, whenever and wherever he is strong enough and wise enough to read God's thoughts and follow the lines of God's purpose. *H. W. Mabie,* in *The Life of the Spirit.*

21. *Paul stood forth in the midst of them.* Contrast Jonah with Paul, the guilty stupor of the former, down "in the sides of the ship," cowering before the storm, with the calm behavior and collected courage of the latter. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Leaves from the Tree of Life.*

21. *Ye should have hearkened unto me.* Paul, who had once already narrowly escaped from such a wreck, drifting on a spar or swimming for a night and a day (2 Cor. 11.25), was justified in his advice at Fair Haven not to run the risk of coasting farther in the dangerous season on a coast where such sudden squalls are a common feature. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *Paul the Traveller.*

23. *There stood by me this night an angel of God.* With Christ on board our voyage is safe. For Him there is no uncharted land, no unmarked reef, no unknown tide. "The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands prepared the dry land." If we sail with Christ, we need have no fear for the ship. He does not still every tempest; He sometimes lets us feel the roll of the breakers and go through the heart of the storm, but He takes the terror out of them. He stills the heart, and that is more than stilling the tempest. *W. C. Piggott,* in *Sunday-School Chronicle.*

24. *God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee.* In after days when the sailors told the story of the wreck, they would say it was a miracle they were not lost. But the only miracle was the will of God, in chosing their vessel for His servant's journey. And we are like these sailors in this respect. We all owe debts where we little dream of it. A father's example, and a mother's prayer, the presence of good men and women in our childhood, the Spirit of Jesus breathing in the world and falling on us like the blowing of the wind, these influences mold us when we never know of it, and may save us in our hours of gale and storm. *G. H. Morrison,* in *Footsteps of the Flock.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

15. *The ship.* By this time the vast city of Rome had become almost entirely dependent on foreign corn-fields for its bread. Egypt was the chief source of supply, and every year an enormous quantity of grain was shipped at Alexandria for Puteoli or Ostia. The vessels which carried it were of a specially large build, and the Alexandrian corn-fleet was the most striking feature in the commerce of the eastern Mediterranean. As any delay in the arrival of the fleet was the source of great anxiety at Rome, so its arrival was hailed at Puteoli with great rejoicings. Signalmen were on the lookout to announce its approach, and they were able to recognize it by the privilege these vessels possessed of entering the bay of Naples with their sails set. *R. B. Rackham.* It was one of these ships in which the voyage to Rome was being made. See verses 6 and 38.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After the hearing before Agrippa, Festus gave Paul and certain other prisoners into the charge of a centurion named Julius to be taken to Rome. A ship from Adramyttium was about to make the return voyage to the coast of Asia Minor, and Julius took passage with his prisoners. Luke and Aristarchus of Thessalonica were with Paul. The ship stopped at Sidon, when Julius kindly allowed Paul to see his friends, and then crossed over to Cyprus and, sailing around the eastward end of the island, went northwestward to the province of Lycia. This harbor was a great port for ships from Egypt and Syria. They were fortunate in finding there a ship from Alexandria that was bound directly for Italy, and they sailed with it. The wind was unfavorable, and it took them many days to reach Cnidus, the southwestern point of Asia Minor, and not being able to cross the Ægean sea to Greece, as they should have done, they turned southward to Crete. Sailing along the southern shore of that island, they succeeded with difficulty in reaching Fair Havens, where they waited for a change of wind. After a tedious delay the question of continuing the voyage was discussed. The dangerous season for navigation lasted from September fourteenth to November eleventh, and then all navigation on the open sea ceased until March, we are told. "The ship reached Fair Havens in the latter part of September, and was detained there by a continuance of unfavorable winds until October fifth." Paul advised them not to start out again, for he knew a voyage would be attended by great danger to the ship and to their lives. But the harbor was not a good one in which to pass the winter, the captain and owner of the ship were anxious to reach Phœnix and winter there, and the centurion naturally paid more heed to their advice than to Paul's. It was decided to make the attempt to reach Phœnix.

The date was September 58, according to the chronology followed here.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Fair Havens, whence the ship set sail, verse 13, was a harbor near the center of the southern shore of the island of Crete, a little east of Cape Matala, the most conspicuous headland on the coast. Phœnix, the port to which the ship was bound, was a few hours' sail away to the west, the best harbor on the southern coast of Crete.

The island of Cauda was about twenty-five miles south of Phœnix.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When you take up a new copy of the *Youth's Companion,* what page do you read first? I believe most boys turn at once to the page containing the story of adventure. "It beats all the other stories in the paper," one boy exclaimed enthusiastically, "and I wouldn't miss it for anything." There never was a true story of adventure at sea more exciting than Paul's on his way to Rome, as told in the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts, the Sailors' Chapter, as it is called. We have been following the fortunes of our hero for many months, and have seen him in many great perils, but this voyage and shipwreck are more thrillingly interesting than any of the dangers through which he has already passed. Let us turn to our maps and follow his course from the time he left Jerusalem. Why has Festus determined to send Paul to Rome?

For Older Pupils. We have not seen the personal pronoun *we* in our narrative since Paul and the delegates brought their contributions to the Church at Jerusalem and Paul rehearsed all the things God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry, but now at the commencement of the voyage to Rome the pronoun appears again. Luke, then, was with Paul; he loved the sea, and therefore gives us so graphic an account of the voyage. Aristarchus of Thessalonica, too, was with Paul. Professor Ramsay tells us that these two would not have been allowed to accompany Paul as his friends; he cites a case mentioned by Pliny where a wife sought to accompany her husband who was a prisoner, but was denied the privilege, although several slaves were permitted to go with him to Rome as his attendants, and he infers that Luke and Aristarchus went as Paul's slaves, thus adding to Paul's importance in the eyes of the centurion in whose charge he was sent. Who was this centurion? Why did he start with his prisoners for Rome on a coasting-vessel?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Giving Way to the Wind

Wise Yielding. They submitted, in other words, to the tempest when they could not face it, and did it as an act of sound discretion. Probably their ship was not quite as able to battle with storms and hold her course against them as some of the sturdier sea-going vessels of our day, but they put her faithfully and bravely to it as long as they could with safety, then as deliberately and bravely they gave her to the wind and let her drive. Had they undertaken to fight the battle through, holding up against the fury of the tempest, their little craft would most certainly have foundered or been driven under never to rise. By submitting to the tempest just when they must, they proved their seamanship and escaped with their lives. Just so it is in other kinds of storms. When their fury is irresistible, it is no part of wisdom to resist. A dexterous and timely submission is the only way left of getting the mastery.

Indeed, it is no small part of the grandeur of man that he can plan out and execute enterprises that succeed by taking in losses and partial defeats, and adjusting combinations of contrary force so as to throw a balance on his side. A squirrel, lifting his little bush of tail on a chip, may well enough sail for the opposite side of a river when the wind is in that direction, but a man will do it when the wind is against him, and make the wind carry him over besides. First he submits to be carried a little up, then a little down, and the next you see is that by submission he is at exactly the point where he wanted to be and away from which the wind was determined to keep him. And the same is

true, only in a little different sense, when he submits himself at sea to the driving of a hurricane he can not manage at all. Taken in the largest view, it is his way of getting the voyage and making the winds give it to him. And he is only a more truly magisterial creature in his triumph, that he is able to carry his points by taking in such hurricanes of force to be mastered. His submissions therefore cost him no mortification, for they are, in fact, the highest points of mastership in his management.

When the Russians fell away before the victorious army of Napoleon, it cost them doubtless a degree of national mortification, because it was to human force they yielded; but in the fires they kindled and the devastations they made before him, preparing in that deliberate manner his inevitable destruction, it is impossible not to admire the sublimity of their retirement before the storm, and even feel that they have outgeneralled him gloriously enough to put the mortification over on the other side. *Horace Bushnell,* in *The Spirit in Man.*

The Example of the Birches. "'It is a cold, drizzly day in February. All night it has rained slowly, and the rain has frozen as it fell. The white birches excite our pity and compassion. Poor things! they have grown up, tall and lithe, with innumerable little branches springing from their sides; and all these are covered with a thick coat of icy mail. They are totally unable to bear up under such a weight of adversity. They therefore yield gracefully, albeit by compulsion, and bow their bodies to the ground, as if in silent worship of the god of power. It is noticeable that they do not break, but they are all prostrate.

Poor things! are they absolutely lost? Can they ever rise again? Wait and see. A week later we go over the same ground. The ice has gone—melted by the power of even a winter's sun. The poor white birches all lie prone. They cannot so much as lift up their heads toward heaven. They are cast down, but not destroyed. Apparently they can never again stand upright and look their companions in the face. But courage, take courage, all ye who are bowed down with the burdens of this life! These same graceful trees will gradually return to their upright position, and sway their arms to the breeze; their leaves, all fresh with the freshness of spring-time, will yet flutter at the zephyr's breath, and the grace and beauty which was their pride last summer will yet be theirs again before the next summer's solstice shall stir all nature to the full tide of life again. The very wind which appears to be their enemy will yet cause them to look up and salute the rising sun, with outstretched tops pushing heavenward; strong and straight, firm but lithe. They will, next summer, again stand erect as though they had never been overtaken by any disaster, or bowed beneath any load of sorrow."

Yielding to the Inevitable.

For those who know
Themselves, who wisely take
Their way through life, and bow
To what they can not break,
Why should I say that life need yield but *moderate* bliss?

Matthew Arnold.

II Throwing Freight Overboard

A Wise Course. On that stormy voyage when Paul was being taken to Rome and the ship was in danger of foundering, the sailors lightened it by throwing overboard the freight, and then the tackling of the ship, and later the wheat which was the ship's cargo. All these things cast overboard were of great value, but when it was seen that they could not be saved without sinking the ship, there was no question about them, even the owner of the cargo would not insist on keeping it aboard.

There are a multitude of things of value in themselves which are nevertheless a handicap in life's voyage, and to the one whom they burden it is not always plain that they should be thrown out. It requires insight to see what is of vital importance and what may profitably be neglected. What not to do is often of as great importance as what to do, wise neglect as much a factor in success as brave performance. The art of life is to attend to the things which matter, and to neglect the rest, some one has wisely affirmed. What

does matter? That is the question that is more often ignored than settled. The Marthas are cumbered with much serving, they see the need of the work and they do it all because they have never discovered what may be neglected in order that they may have their share of the Marys' better part.

What most matters? If I only can make money and become a rich man I shall be satisfied, says the youth starting out in life. Really?

We must make every effort to establish ourselves in the best society before Helen is through school, says the ambitious mother, this is the chief thing. Is it?

Fame, intoxicating fame, must be mine however it is attained, say the Marie Bashkirtseffs. Indeed?

Power shall be mine, the glory of making men's wills bow to mine, for this I will give up all else in life, the strong man acknowledges to himself. In truth?

A life of ease is what I crave, nothing else matters, but peace and comfort I must have at all costs. Truly?

I must have a good time, a gay time, as long as life lasts, for this is what my nature demands. Does it?

Wealth, position, fame, power, leisure, good times, are all good in themselves, but they are not the chief good. They may be too dearly bought. To gain them much that is of far greater value may be lost. It may be that had the freight not been cast overboard from Paul's ship, the ship and all on board would have perished. What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? But one thing is needful, said the Saviour in the Bethany home. In deed and in truth.

Cast out the Rubbish. When we turn out our rooms, our libraries, we are continually astonished at the rubbish we have allowed to gather, rubbish that has crowded out so much better things. The life record often shows worse than that of the rooms. The supreme effort here should be to gather and find house room only for the best. It is thus we can make life interesting to the last moment. Some of the chief occupations to-day are occupations which store nothing. What inner accumulation comes from spending six nights in the week at bridge whist? A scientific ordering of life will be largely a science of accumulation. We shall settle with ourselves what things are to be sought and retained, and what treated as negligible. *J. Brierley,* in *Religion and Experience.*

Missionary Topic Whom I serve

Paul's Assertion. That fortnight of tossing up and down in Adria, with death looking over the bulwarks of the helpless vessel, would bring out what each man was made of. Paul durst not have professed that he was God's servant, if he had not known that he had been behaving like one. That confession is incumbent on every Christian. We are not to be always displaying our religion before people's faces. There is very little fear of the average Christian of this day blundering on that side. But we are still less to be always hiding it away. One hears a great deal from certain quarters about a religion that does not need to be vocal, that shows what it is without the necessity for words. Blessed be God! there is such a religion, but we generally find that the people who have it most truly are the people that are least tongue-tied when opportunity arises, and that, if they have been witnessing for God in their quiet discharge of duty, with their hands instead of their lips, they are quite as ready to witness with their lips when it is fitting that they should do so.

Action is a more powerful way of inviting others to serve God than direct appeals, but it must be backed up by a life according with it. How the centurion and the crew would have laughed at Paul, if this had been the first time that they had had any reason to suppose that he was not, like them, a worshipper of Rome's gods! They would have answered, "The God, whose you are, and whom you serve! Why you are just the same kind of man as if you bowed down to Jupiter like the rest of us." *Alexander Maclaren,* in *Leaves from the Tree of Life.*

The Influence in India of the Lives of Missionaries. While lieutenant governor of the Punjab, Sir W. Mackworth Young bore this testimony: "As

a business man speaking to business men, I am prepared to say that the work which has been done by missionary agency in India exceeds in importance all that has been done (and much has been done) by the British government in India since its commencement. Let me take the province which I know best. I do not underestimate the forces which have been brought to bear on the races in the Punjab by our beneficient rule, by British justice and enlightenment, but I am convinced that the effect on native character produced by the self-denying labors of missionaries is far greater. The Punjab bears on its historical roll the names of many Christian statesmen who have honored God by their lives and endeared themselves to the people by their faithful work; but I venture to say that if they could speak to us from the great unseen, there is not one of them that would not proclaim that the work done by men like French, Clark, Newton and Forman, who went in and out among the people for a whole generation or more, and who preached by their lives the nobility of self-sacrifice, and the lesson of love to God and man, is a higher and nobler work, and more far-reaching in its consequence."

Good Counsel for Everyone. In addressing a company of missionaries Professor Henry Drummond said:

You can take nothing greater to the heathen world than the impress and reflection of the love of God upon your own character. That is the universal language. It will take you years to speak in Chinese or in the dialects of India. From the day you land, that language of love, understood by all, will be pouring forth its unconscious eloquence. It is the man who is the missionary, it is not his words, his character is his message. In the heart of Africa, among the Great Lakes, I have come across black men and women who remembered the only white man they ever saw before—David Livingstone; and as you cross his footsteps in the dark continent, men's faces light up as they speak of the kind doctor who passed there years ago. They could not understand him; but they felt the love that beat in his heart.

An Indian's Testimony. "Missionary," said a stubborn opposer as at length he yielded and became a Christian, "I accept the religion of the Book because I have seen your love for me and for my people. You gave medicine to cure us; you divided your food with us when my gun failed to kill the deer; you helped me with your own hands to get my land ready to plant, and then you gave me potatoes to plant; you gave us good advice during the week days, and so I have decided that as what you say on the Sabbath is from the same heart, I must receive it." *Egerton R. Young,* in *The Battle of the Bears.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

If my bark sinks, 'tis to another sea. *Channing.*
Better lose the anchor than the whole ship. *Dutch Proverb.*
Better bend the neck than bruise the forehead. *Danish Proverb.*

They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters,
These see the works of Jehovah,
And his wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the strong wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they are quiet;
So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

Psa. 107.23-25, 28-30.

To belong to God expresses the essence of inward religion, while to serve Him is the sum of religion in practice. *Alexander Maclaren.*

The sea is mighty, but a mightier sways
His restless billows. Thou, whose hands have scooped
His boundless gulf and built his shore, Thy breath
That moved in the beginning o'er his face,
Moves o'er it evermore. *Bryant.*

Any man will rather make shipwreck of his goods than of his life; but many will rather make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience than of their goods. *Matthew Henry.*

Blessed be the...God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our afflictions, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God. 2 Cor. 1.3, 4.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

On my voyage of life I will not burden my ship with that which either endangers it or impedes its progress.

Paul believed that God's presence was always with him. It was doubtless in answer to prayer that he received the assurance that he and all on board should escape with their lives. In all the storm and stress of life we must commit our way unto the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will bring to pass whatever is best for us.

Could we make Paul's assertion—whose I am and whom I serve—to those with whom we have been closely associated for two weeks? Would our life with them bear out our words?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

When the northwest wind which had kept the ship at Fair Havens gave place to a gentle south wind, they set sail expecting to reach Phœnix in a few hours. But the wind again suddenly changed and the ship could not face the violent northeast gale that blew down against it from over the high mountains of Crete. They were obliged to give way to the wind and allow it to drive them from their course. Running under the shelter of the small island of Cauda, they managed there to hoist on board the small boat they had been towing, and to pass strong cables around the ship's hull to prevent its timbers from starting, at the same time lowering all the unnecessary rigging or perhaps throwing out weights to retard the progress of the ship toward the dangerous quicksands off the African coast. The storm grew worse, and the next day they threw out part of the freight; on the third day the heavier tackling of the ship was flung overboard. Not a glimpse of the sun could be had nor was a star visible, and the sailors could not tell where they were, food could scarcely be prepared and no one cared for it, crew and passengers were only waiting for the ship to sink, for they had lost all hope of being saved. Then Paul reminded them that he had warned them against sailing from Crete, and now he had another message for them, and he exhorted them to be of good cheer, telling them of the vision he had had and of the assurance that no life should be lost, although they would be cast on an island, for he must stand before Cæsar, and God had granted him all those that sailed with him. The promise had come from God, whose he was and whom he served, and he believed God's promises.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Vicarious blessings.
2. The voyage of life.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Write an account of what happened to Paul from the time he left Cæsarea until he left Malta. 2. What qualities were shown by Paul on this voyage? 3. Why did Paul prevent the escape of the sailors, verse 30-32, when he believed that God had promised no life should be lost? 4. Why were the soldiers anxious that their prisoners should not escape? (Acts 12.19; 16.27.) 5. What can you learn from Luke 13.1-5 and John 9.1-3 in regard to the current belief in retribution for sin? 6 Where before had Paul been called a god? (Lesson VII, 2d quarter.) 7. What early lesson of this year's course do verses 8 and 9 recall? (Lesson XI, 1st quarter.)

LESSON VI—NOVEMBER 7

PAUL A PRISONER—THE SHIPWRECK

Read Acts 27.2-28.10. Commit verses 28.9, 10.

Golden Text

Jehovah redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that take refuge in him shall be condemned. Psalm 34.22.

LESSON TEXT Acts 27.39-28.10

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it. 40 And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. 41 But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmovable, but the stern began to break up by the violence *of the waves.* 42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any *of them* should swim out and escape. 43 But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they who could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land; 44 and the rest, some on planks, and some on *other* things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.

1 And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita. 2 And the barbarians showed us no common kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. 3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* creature hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. 5 Howbeit he shook off the creature into the fire, and took no harm. 6 But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but when they were long in expectation and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

7. Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius; who received us, and entertained us three days courteously. 8 And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. 9 And when this was done, the rest also that had diseases in the island came, and were cured: 10 who also honored us with many honors; and when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

39. *They know not the land.* Valleta was the harbor of Malta visited by Alexandrian ships; this part of the coast was unknown to the sailors.

40. *Loosing the bands of the rudders.* They were paddle-shaped rudders, one on each side of the stern. "They had been drawn out of the water and lashed to the ship's side; these lashings were now loosened, and the rudders let down into the water in order to steer the vessel."

1, 2. *We know, that this island is called Melita.* This they learned from the inhabitants.—*Barbarians.* Not barbarous people, as in the A. V. *Barbarians*

was the term given by the Greeks and Romans to all who did not speak the Greek or Latin language.

4, 5. *No doubt this man is a murderer.* Compare Luke 12.1-5; John 9.1-3.—*Took no harm.* See Mark 16.18.

6. *Fallen down suddenly.* "Trembling she stood, and on the sudden dropped," are the words in which Shakespeare tells the effect on Cleopatra of the asp's bite.—*Said that he was a god.* See Acts 14.11-15.

7. *The chief man of the island.* The Greek means literally, *the first man.* πρῶτος Μελιταίων, the First of the Melitans, has been found on inscriptions.

SUGGESTIVE WORDS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

41. *The foreship remained unmovable.* The ship struck a bottom of mud, graduating into tenacious clay, into which the fore part would fix itself, and be held fast, while the stern was exposed to the force of the waves. *James Smith,* in *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul.*

42. *Kill the prisoners lest any of them should escape.* Paul, of course, occupied a very different position from the other prisoners. He was a man of distinction, a Roman citizen who had appealed for a trial to the supreme court of Rome. The others had been in all probability condemned to death, and were going to supply the perpetual demand which Rome made on the provinces for human victims to amuse the populace by their death in the arena. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *St. Paul the Traveller.*

3. *A viper came out and fastened on his hand.* The viper was probably in a torpid state, and was restored to activity by the heat. It was now cold, in consequence both of the storm and the lateness of the season, and such reptiles become torpid as soon as the temperature falls sensibly below the mean temperature of the place which they inhabit. Vipers, too, lurk in rocky places, and that is the character of the region where the incident occurs. They are accustomed to dart at their enemies, sometimes several feet at a bound; and hence the one mentioned here could reach the hand of Paul as he stood near the fire. *Hackett, Commentary.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

42. *The soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should escape.* The soldiers were answerable with their own lives for the safe-keeping of the prisoners. Herod ordered the guards of the prison put to death from which Peter made his escape, Acts 12.19, and the jailor was on the point of killing himself when the earthquake occurred and he thought Paul and Silas and the other prisoners had escaped, Acts 16.27.

2. *The barbarians.* This term does not mean that they were savages. Luke as a Greek speaks of the inhabitants of Malta who were not Greeks and did not speak the Greek language, just as members of the Greek-letter fraternities to-day call those students who are not fraternity members, barbarians or barbs. The inhabitants of Malta were probably of Phœnician or Cathaginian descent, and "spoke the Punic language with perhaps an admixture of Greek," which sounded to Luke like "bar-bar-bar."

4. *Justice hath not suffered to live.* "It was the tendency not only of the barbarian but of the 'religious' Athenian mind to personify and deify qualities and attributes: thus the Athenians took 'the resurrection' for a deity, and as we speak of 'Providence' so the Maltese spoke of 'Justice.' The personification of the Δίκη, Justice, of Zeus was common in the Greek poets. In Mythology she was reckoned as a goddess, being the daughter of Zeus and Themis." The current belief is expressed in these words from *The Wisdom of Solomon:* Because the spirit of the Lord hath filled the world, and that which holdeth all things together hath knowledge of every voice, therefore no man that uttereth unrighteous things shall be unseen; neither shall Justice, when it convicteth, pass him by. For in the midst of his counsels the ungodly shall be searched out, and the sound of his words shall come unto the Lord to bring to conviction his lawless deeds...For thine all-powerful hand, that created the world out of formless matter, lacked not means to send upon them a multitude of bears or fierce lions, or new created beasts, full of rage,...yea, and

without these might they have fallen by a single breath, being pursued by Justice, and scattered abroad by the breath of thy power.

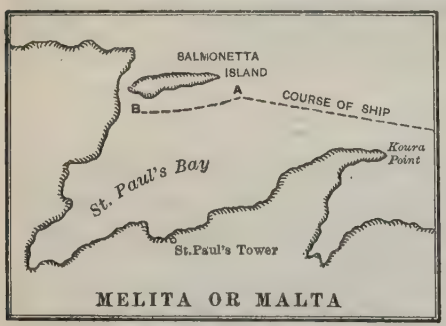
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For fourteen days the ship had been driven by the wind they knew not whither, when at midnight the glad cry of "Land" was heard. Soundings were taken, and the water proved shallower each time. Fearing lest they might be headed for a rocky coast, they cast out four anchors from the stern and waited for daylight. The sailors under pretence of throwing out anchors from the foreship had lowered the small boat, and no one but Paul perceived their intention of making their escape in it. He sent word to the centurion of their plan, warning him that if the sailors made their escape the ship could not be managed and they would all perish. Promptly the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat and let her float away. Morning was near at hand, and Paul urged them all to take food, for in their danger and despair they had not eaten. Taking bread himself he gave thanks to God and began to eat. The others, two hundred and seventy six there were in all aboard, took courage and followed his example. Then they lightened the ship by throwing out what remained of their cargo of grain.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Melita, now called Malta, is a British island near the middle of the Mediterranean, two hundred miles from the African coast, sixty miles from the island of Sicily. By referring to the Maltese cross and the "Knights of Malta" recall the part played by Malta in the Crusades. It is now very thickly populated.

The name of "St. Paul's Bay" has been given to the inlet on the north side of the island where it is believed the shipwreck occurred. It is spoken of as "the place where two seas met," and south of the small island of Salmonetta two currents, one from the east and the other from the north, meet where the ship was run aground. The probable course of the ship and place of shipwreck are shown on the diagram. Five miles away was the capital of the island, now known as Citta Vecchia, Old City. Here there is a cathedral which the priests claim is built on the site of the house of Publius, and there is a cave shown to credulous tourists as the abode of Paul while on the island.



A. *Place where ship was anchored.*
B. *Place where ship was beached.*

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Continued stories, you know, usually end each time at some exciting point of the narrative, and the story of our hero was no exception last week. The ship on which he was a prisoner had been driven to and fro for two weeks, it had been stripped of everything, no one knew where they were, crew and all the passengers save one had given up all hope, and were expecting death at any moment, and in the face of this seemingly certain end Paul had stood before them and urged them to be of good cheer, for God had promised that all lives should be spared. What happened soon after this? (See the Historical Background.)

For Older Pupils. Paul a Prisoner, the title of our lesson reads, and when the ship set sail from Myra probably no passenger or sailor gave more than a passing thought to the Jewish prisoner that had there come aboard in the centurion's charge. He was a Roman who had appealed to Cæsar, and therefore was entitled to more consideration than the other prisoners, but no one could foresee that before long he would become the foremost man on board and all

would look to him for hope and cheer. The hour revealed the man, and Paul the Prisoner, though prisoner still, became Paul the Leader, who counseled and encouraged and directed the rest. It was his perfect trust in God that gave him his confidence and thus made him a power in that perilous time. In our interest in the exciting events themselves, we must not lose sight of the grand faith of the great apostle to whom God had granted the lives of all those who sailed with him.

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Hour reveals the Man

The Hour does not make the Man. One sometimes hears it said that circumstances made General Grant, Abraham Lincoln, and other great leaders of men. It is true that opportunities came to such men, but they were ready for the opportunities. Opportunities equally great have come to other men, whose earlier life has not made them ready for high achievements, and they have passed them by. Sir Henry Havelock was twenty-eight when he entered the army of India, and he was sixty-two before the opportunity came to distinguish himself. During these thirty-four years of waiting he had made himself skilful in planning and ready for leadership, and then came the opportunity for that march to Lucknow which made him famous.

Whether one is ready for the hour of opportunity or emergency depends on the whole previous life, and the real testing time is not the critical moment itself. but all the apparently unimportant moments which precede it. The hour reveals, but does not make, the man. David was able to save the armies of Israel because he had learned to use his sling in his shepherd life. It was General Charles James Napier who said, "The smith who has to look for his hammer when the iron is red strikes too late; the hammer should be uplifted to fall like a thunderbolt while the white heat is in the metal."

The greatness of Paul as a man and as a leader is shown on this voyage to Rome. His brave endurance of hardship, his presence of mind in time of danger, his tireless activity, his unselfishness, his practical wisdom, his sympathy for others, his good cheer, and above all, his perfect trust in God, are brought out by the exciting scenes of peril. But all these qualities have been shown again and again in the record of his life given in the Acts, and in his own self-revelation in his letters. He was the foremost man on that ship, because he had lived the noblest life and had attained to the grandest character.

To-days are made by Yesterdays. Moses will control our jurists tomorrow because he spent forty years in the desert reflecting upon the principles of justice. Paul had the honor to fashion our political institutions because he gave twelve years of general preparation and three years of special preparation to the study of individual rights. Milton tells us that he spent four and thirty years of solitary and unceasing study in accumulating his material for the heroic poem that the world would not willingly let die. Edward Everett tells us that Daniel Webster retired late and slept soundly the night before his celebrated reply to Haine. The next day the great statesman fronted the senate, having in his hand only a few headings of his speech. Seeking to explain the calm confidence of the orator, his biographer says: "A full hundred oratorical triumphs before him lent Webster confidence and intellectual momentum."

If we define a great nation as a people with a noble history lying back of it, let us define a great individual as a soul with years many and great lying back of him and lending him their intellectual and moral force. As the gardens of Italy have their treasures through the snows and the mineral stimulants that are washed down from the mountain sides, so man's to-days are made rich and deep because many noble thoughts and purposes out of the yesterdays have poured down into his present. *Newell Dwight Hillis,* in *A Man's Value to Society.*

In Training. The powers of the spiritual life must be kept in daily training in order that the unexpected trials may be met with an unshaken purpose. Carelessness in every day living weakens the reserve strength of the soul. To work conscientiously at each day's duty, to take pleasure in simple things, to

abstain wholly from all the excesses of anger, impatience, discouragement and envy, to keep the soul steady by communion with God, and the exercise of persistent charity and kindliness of heart—this is to be in constant training for the sudden tests of spiritual strength and courage that come into every life. *Wellspring.*

II Hospitality

Hospitality in Ancient Times. From the day when Abraham welcomed the three strangers who came to his tent, onward throughout the Old Testament times, we see the need then existing for entertaining strangers, and the exhortations in the New Testament,—as in Romans Paul urges the duty of "communicating to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" and in his first epistle Peter exhorts the Christians to use "hospitality one to another without murmuring"—show that the duty continued to exist. In the primitive church a Christian on arriving as a stranger in a city went at once to the church and among the members there he was sure of a welcome and of free entertainment. Since human nature is the same in all ages, this generous hospitality was abused, and then it became customary for the Christian to carry with him a letter from his own church which admitted him to the confidence and care of the churches elsewhere. Our word *hospital* meant at first *guest house* (Latin *hospitalis,* from *hospes,* a stranger or guest), and was given to buildings erected near the large churches for the entertainment of strangers. It is interesting to recall that such hospitality often led to lasting friendships, indicated by the exchange of the *tessera hospitalis,* or hospitality tokens. These tokens were pieces of wood or stone which were broken in two, and exchanged after each one had written a name on the piece he received. The fitting together of the pieces proved the validity of a claim for hospitality made by their descendants.

The Hospitality of the Melitans. Luke seems to have been somewhat surprised at the hospitality received from people who spoke another language and were neither Jews nor Greeks, and therefore to him barbarians. They showed us no common kindness, he says, and he recalls how they received them and built a fire for them, because it was cold and raining, and how Publius, the chief man of the island, entertained them courteously for three days, and how when they were about to sail away three months later the people put on board their ship the things needful for their voyage.

Modern Hospitality. Before any railways penetrated the Allegheny Mountains, many poor emigrants in wagons and on horse-back travelled the National Road to the wildernesses beyond the Ohio river. Inns were few. Several of the wealthy planters in Maryland and Virginia erected near to the road cabins on their land in which were comfortable beds and a fireplace for the gratuitous use of these unknown people at night. They were marked Traveller's Rest, and left open and unguarded. None of these little comforts with which they were provided were ever stolen. Sometimes the tired travellers scrawled with charcoal on the wall before they went on their way a word of thanks to the kind hosts whose faces they would never see.

Few readers of these lines will probably ever have a chance to show kindness in these ways. But there are other kinds of hospitality. A man's life is something like one of these plantations. He parcels it out; so much space is given to tillage, to study, to research; so much to business; so much to his home and family ties. But is there no little place in it for pure hospitality? The hour, the five minutes each day in which he brings into some stranger's life strength and cheer? We fulfill our duty, perhaps, to father, brother and friend. What space in our lives is given to the unknown traveller who passes us by? *Youth's Companion.*

Receiving Strangers. The directions familiarly given is that we should meet strangers half-way. But I do not find that this wholly answers. These strangers may be represented by globules of quicksilver, or, indeed, of water, on a marble table. Suppose you pour out two little globules of quicksilver at each of two points. Suppose you make the globules just so large that they meet half-way, thus, ∞. At the point where they touch they only touch. It even seems as if there was a little repulsion so that they shrink away from each other. But, if we will enlarge one of the drops ever so little,

so that it shall meet the other a very little beyond half-way, the two will gladly run together into one, and will even forget that they ever have been parted. That is a true rule for meeting strangers. Meet them a little more than half-way. You will find in life that the people who do this are the people everywhere prized and loved. *Edward Everett Hale.*

Christ's Example. It does not seem quite right when two or three or a dozen people are living lives that are warm and bright that they should spend a good part of their time beaming on each other. Christ did undoubtedly do a little of that in that beautiful Bethany home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus; He beamed on them and they beamed on Him, and on very rare occasions, as it would seem, did what some of us do all the time, had a beautiful and comfortable time enjoying people that were thoroughly congenial to Him. But that was not the way He lived. We, some of us, live so. We, some of us, never beam except on people that beam on us. We have beaming dinner-parties, beaming sociables, beaming receptions, and the like.

Christ's conception of Christianity was of something whereby the strong helped the weak, not helped those who were strong and so needed no help; something whereby those that were warm gathered around their fireplaces those that were cold, not those that had been comfortably heated by sitting at a comfortable fireplace of their own; something whereby those that were bright and cheery embraced with their hospitality those that were lonely and despondent, not those that were already so luminous and glad as to make more of the same an extravagance and a superfluity. *Charles H. Parkhurst.*

III Missionary Topic Heathen Reasoning

He is a Murderer. When the natives of Melita saw the viper spring out from the brush that Paul had gathered and fasten on his hand, they said to one another that he was no doubt a murderer, who had escaped the perils of the sea, but whom Justice would not suffer to live. In ancient times it was a common belief that a murderer might escape human justice, but he could not escape the justice of Heaven. It was felt that wrong-doing should be punished, and because death was the human penalty for murder, it was reasoned that the divine penalty would be the same. The instinctive belief in retribution for wrong is a true one, but divine retribution and human retribution are not meted out alike.

Hindu Reasoning. In the shop of a zealous Hindu at Simla, there hangs a collection box on which is printed in Hindu, Urdu, and English, "Cows Supporting Fund." The money collected is used to support cows that are too weak to work, or cows that have been purchased from Mohammedan butchers. Hindus think that they will be rewarded for preventing cows from being butchered, but when some one asked how the Hindu orphans were supported the answer was: "Why should we support them? They must have done something very bad in a former life to be overtaken by such a punishment."

He is a God. Near the middle of the last century, David Brainerd had heard of a savage tribe in the heart of the New Jersey forests, and yearned to bring them under Christian influences. He pushed on through the wilderness till he found himself near their village, and stopped to rest and fortify himself for the new undertaking before him.

When he finally reached the wigwams, he was an astonished man. His faith and hope had made him bold, but he little expected when he faced the enemies of his race that a "whole village" would come out to meet him as if he had been a long-looked-for friend. Led by their chief, the Indians welcomed him as their guest, and seemed almost to reverence him as a prophet. He stayed among them and preached, winning their hearts and the faith of the untutored natives, until he gathered a church of between seventy and eighty Christian Indians.

Brainerd never knew, until they told him, the secret of his welcome. The savages had discovered the white stranger in the woods, and a party of them had waited to steal upon him and kill him as soon as he entered his tent. Peering between the folds of the canvas, they saw him on his knees, praying.

Ignorant wonder held them back, and their wonder turned to awe when they saw a rattlesnake crawl over the stranger's feet and pause beside him,

with its head raised as if to strike; but it only gazed at him a moment, flickered its red tongue, and glided out of the tent on the opposite side. The Indians hurried back and reported that the white man was under the protection of the Great Spirit.

However much the superstition of these "children of nature" influenced their thought, they told a Christian truth in pagan version. It is certain that

"Man is immortal till his work is done,"

and God had work for Brainerd to do. *Youth's Companion.*

African Reasoning. Mr. Mackay, a missionary in Uganda, has told us in his diary how he dug for water on the top of a hill, while the natives declared that water could only be found at the bottom. "When we got too far down to throw up the earth with a shovel," he writes, "I set up a trestle of strong trees; and with a rope and pulley and bucket, much to the astonishment of the natives, we hoisted up the clay, till we reached water just at the depth I predicted. The people had never seen a deep well before. It took more than a week to sink the well; but when I afterwards repaired a battered pump which I bought in London, and they saw a copious stream ascend twenty feet high, and flow and flow, as long as one worked the handle, their wonder and amazement knew no bounds. "Mackay lubare, Mackay lubare dala!" was cried by all. (Mackay is the Great Spirit, he is truly the Great Spirit.) But I told them that there was only one Great Spirit, that is, God, and I was only a man like themselves."

SENTENCE SERMONS

The thoughtless, others thoughtless make,
The brave make others brave. *Augustus M. Lord.*

That which has always been the voice of his heart will now be the voice of his lips. *Archbishop French.*

The youth who will rule to-morrow is the youth who to-day is storing up resources of knowledge and wisdom, of self-reliance and courage. *Newell Dwight Hillis.*

The Christian can not, in an unexpected emergency, gather in a moment all needed spiritual power; not to be ready in advance for great duties or great needs, is to fail. *J. R. Miller.*

Let thy house be open toward the street, and let the poor be the sons of thy house. *Jewish Saying.*

Forget not to show love unto strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Heb. 13.2.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Phil. 4.6.

We may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast. Heb. 6.19.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

"I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me," asserted Paul after telling his fellow passengers that God had promised to save them all from death. Yet when he saw that the sailors were about to escape in the small boat and leave the rest to their fate, he did not sit by and let them do it because he knew the rest of them would be saved somehow, since God had promised this. He knew that God works through human agencies, and that he must do his part while trusting in God's help.

A number of ministers were once speaking of special causes for thanksgiving, each one narrating some peril from which he had escaped, when Archbishop Whately quietly remarked: "I have a story that eclipses yours, and I have even greater reason than you to thank God. I was never on a flaming vessel, was never subjected to short rations, and was never shipwrecked." Do you see how much Paul had to be thankful for in having escaped the perils of the sea, and death at the hands of the soldiers, but do you fail to see the causes for thankfulness that are yours? Forget not all His benefits, the Psalmist counsels.

Paul was the leader on that voyage because he had prepared himself for leadership. His prayer for safety received an answer because he knew how to prevail with God in prayer. He was full of courage and cheer because he had lived a life of trust in God. How are you preparing for the time of trouble?

Paul did not think it beneath the dignity of a leader of men to gather sticks for the fire on shore.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

The fourteenth night out from Fair Havens the ship rode at anchor near the land, and when day dawned a sandy beach was seen in the midst of the rocky shore. It was determined to make an effort to beach the vessel there. The anchors were cut off, the rudders freed from their fastenings, and the foresail hoisted. The vessel moved forwards, but soon her bow was firmly held in the mud a short distance from the shore, and her stern was broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers wished to kill all the prisoners lest they should make their escape on reaching land, but this the centurion would not permit on Paul's account, and he commanded all who could swim to jump overboard and reach the land first so as to help the others who made their escape on planks and fragments of the ship.

It was the island of Malta which they all thus reached in safety, and the inhabitants treated them very kindly, making a fire on shore, for it was cold and raining. Paul busied himself in gathering sticks and throwing them on the fire, and the others were startled to see a viper that he had taken up with the sticks spring out of the pile and fasten on his hands. "He is a murderer," they said one to another, "he has indeed escaped death at sea, but now he receives his just punishment." But Paul calmly shook off the viper into the fire, and when he failed to fall down dead from its bite as they expected they changed their minds in regard to him and said that he must be a god.

Publius, the chief man on the island, courteously entertained them for three days, and Paul repaid his kindness by curing the illness of his father. Other sick ones were brought to Paul and he healed them. When three months had passed all were able to continue the journey to Rome in a ship from Alexandria that had wintered in the chief harbor of the island, the things needful for the voyage having been put aboard for them by the grateful inhabitants of Malta.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The character of Paul. See page 18.
2. Opportunities for service.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Who was emperor at Rome during the years 54-68? For what was he noted? 2. Write a description of the city of Rome in the first century. 3. Where was Paul when he wrote the letter to the Romans? (See statement at end of the Epistle in A. V.) 4. How long before he went to Rome? 5. What did he say in Rom. 1.9-11; 15.22, 23 about his desire to visit Rome? 6. What Christians from Rome had he met at Corinth? (Lesson V, third quarter.) 7. In what cities before he came to Rome had he remained some time? (Acts 11.26; 18.11; 19.10; 24.27.) 8. To whom had Paul said before this that he was on trial for "the hope of Israel"? (Acts 26.6.) 9. Look up these references and tell who were some of Paul's companions during his imprisonment at Rome, and state who each one was or what he did for Paul: Col. 1.7; 4.10, 14; Phil. 1.1; 4.18; Eph. 6.21; Philem. 1. 10. Do great men need encouragement? 11. What letters did Paul write during this imprisonment? 12. What occurred at Rome in the year 64? 13. In what way can the book of Acts be said to have a logical ending? 14. How did Paul meet his death?

LESSON VII—NOVEMBER 14

PAUL A PRISONER—IN ROME

Read Acts 28.11-31. Commit verses 30, 31.

Golden Text

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth. Rom. 1.16.

LESSON TEXT Acts 28.11-24, 30, 31

11 And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was The Twin Brothers. 12 And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. 13 And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli; 14 where we found brethren, and were entreated to tarry with them seven days: and so we came to Rome. 15 And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as The Market of Appius and The Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

16 And when we entered unto Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: 18 who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught whereof to accuse my nation. 20 For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and to speak with *me:* for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. 21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded *the matter,* testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.

30 And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

11. *After three months.* As soon as navigation began again, possibly as early as February.—*The Twin Brothers.* In Greek the *Dioscuri,* whose names of *Castor* and *Pollux* are given in the A. V.

13. *We made a circuit.* The Greek verb is variously translated. The A. V. reads *fetched a compass,* the margin of the R. V., *cast loose;* another reading is *tacked to and fro.*

14. *We found brethren.* In the Satires of Juvenal we read that at Puteoli "the Syrian Orontes first disgorged its crowds on the way to the Roman

THE APPIAN WAY RESTORED AS IN THE TIME OF CHRIST

Tiber"; this being the usual landing place for travelers from Syria, a Christian community would naturally have been early established here.—*And so we came to Rome.* "And so, *i. e.* with a good courage and in a spirit of thankfulness," because of the encouragement received during the week's stay with the brethren at Puteoli.—*We came to Rome.* See Light from Oriental Life.

15. *From thence.* From Rome.—*As far as the Market of Appius and The Three Taverns.* They came in two companies, the first going to the Market of Appius, ten miles farther away from Rome than The Three Taverns.

16. *And when we entered into Rome.* Margin, Some ancient authorities insert (as in the A. V.) *The centurion delivered the prisoners to the Chief of the camp: but.* This clause is omitted from the R. V. because it is not found in the oldest MSS.—*With the soldier that guarded him.* To whom he was probably chained, verse 20. Soldiers relieved one another in this duty, and thus he became known throughout the prætorian guard, Phil. 1.12, 13.

17, 19. *When they were come.* They were, no doubt eager to see the writer of that wonderful letter they had received, our Epistle to the Romans.—*The people.* Of Israel.—*Desired to set me at liberty.* Acts 23.29; 24.23; 25.25; 26.32.—*When the Jews spake against it.* To satisfy them Festus had proposed a renewal of the trial at Jerusalem, Acts 25.9, and this constrained Paul to appeal to Cæsar.

20-22. *The hope of Israel.* The Messianic hope, the promise of the Saviour. See Acts 26.6.—*This sect.* They speak of the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24.5) as they would of the sect of the Sadducees. "Why were the Roman Jews so reserved and conciliatory? The commonly-received answer is, that they lived in Rome in a state of great insecurity. They had but recently been allowed to return from banishment. Some think that the decree of banishment had been occasioned by tumults caused by the unbelieving Jews attacking their Christian fellow-countrymen. They saw Paul respected by imperial officers; they felt themselves obliged to be very careful to avoid all show of disturbance" (*Lindsay*).

23, 24. *Testifying the Kingdom of God.* Proclaiming its spiritual nature, rather than temporal nature as was the common Jewish belief.—*Persuading them concerning Jesus.* Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day, Luke 24.46.—*Some believed and some disbelieved.* If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand (Mark 3.24), and therefore, as earlier at Antioch in Pisidia and at Corinth and at Ephesus, Paul declares that they judged themselves unworthy of salvation and that the gospel is sent to the Gentiles, who will receive it.

25, 27. *Your fathers.* In verse 19 Paul says *my nation.* The quotation is from Isa. 6.9-10, one used by Jesus against the Jews and reported in all the gospels (Matt. 13.14, 15; Mark 4.12; Luke 8.10; John 12.40), and by Paul again in Rom. 11.8.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

16. *With the soldier that guarded him.* Paul never described himself as a prisoner of Rome, but always as the prisoner of Jesus Christ. What a glory this adds to life! The chain which Rome imposes is transformed into the golden bracelet of a great love token. *G. Campbell Morgan.*

20. *I am bound with this chain.* Who would not rather be the despised apostle who was able to say, "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day...henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness"—than the imperial Nero on his throne, hated by his contemporaries, and gibbeted forever on the page of history as the monster of monarchs? *William M. Taylor,* in *Peter the Apostle.*

31. *Preaching the Kingdom of God.* A pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigor from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the capitol. Nor was the influence of Christianity confined to the time or to the limits of the Roman Empire. After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations

of Europe, the most distinguished portion of human kind in the arts of learning, as well as in arms. By the industry and zeal of the Europeans it has been widely spread to the most distant shores of Asia and Africa; and by the means of their colonies has been firmly established from Canada to Chili, in a world unknown to the ancients. *Cardinal Gibbon, Rome.*

31. *Teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.* Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which was preached unto you, which also you received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised again on the third day according to the scriptures. 1 Cor. 15.1-4.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *Whose sign was The Twin Brothers.* Painted or carved on the prow of ancient ships was an image of a god, or some emblem of a deity, such as the shield of Minerva, or any image of a man or an animal. This image was the ship's sign which gave the ship her name. According to mythology, Castor and Pollux were the Twin Brothers, the sons of Jupiter and Leda, and were regarded as the tutelar gods of sailors. They were sometimes represented merely by two stars, hovering over a ship, but usually as two young men on horseback, wearing conical caps and having stars above them, as in the accompanying coin from Rhegium.

Vessels with Eyes, Represented on a Wall Painting at Herculaneum.

14, 16. *We came to Rome; we entered into Rome.* The double expression of arrival at Rome in verses 14 and 16 is remarkable, but it seems due to the double sense that every name of a city-state bears in Greek; the word *Rome* might either include the entire territory of the city, the whole *ager Romanus*, or be restricted to the walls and buildings. Thus verse 14, "we reached the state Rome," the bounds of which were probably pointed out as the party reached them; in 15, "we passed through two points in the *ager Romanus* and in 16, "we entered the (walls of) Rome." *W. M. Ramsay*, in *St. Paul the Traveller.*

COIN OF RHEGIUM.
Obv. Heads of Castor and Pollux; Rev. the Dioscuri Mounted.

30. *Two whole years.* Josephus says of Tiberius that he kept Herod Agrippa I long in bonds, "according to his usual custom, being a delayer of affairs." A later law provided that a prisoner should be freed if the prosecutor failed to appear against him within a year.

30, 31. *In his own hired dwelling preaching the kingdom of God.* The Christian practice of meeting in private houses continued until the close of the second century. An elevated seat for the teacher and a table for the Lord's Supper were provided in the regular places of meeting. In "The Church in the Early Centuries," Professor T. M. Lindsay says: "The ground plan of the earliest Roman church, discovered in 1900 in the Forum at Rome, is modeled, not on the basilica or public hall, but on the audience hall of the wealthy Roman burgher, and the recollections of the familiar surroundings at the meetings in the house-churches probably guided the pencil of the architect who first planned the earliest public buildings dedicated to Christian worship. Old liturgies which enjoin the deacons at the period of the service when the Lord's Supper is about to be celebrated to commend the mothers to take their babies

on their knees, bring with them memories of these homely gatherings in private homes."

In the time of Diocletian (284-305), churches had been erected in the chief cities, and at the beginning of the fourth century there were forty Christian churches in Rome.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The lesson text follows immediately that of last Sunday, and ends with the last words of the Acts. Does the book end, or does it merely stop? Has Luke accomplished the purpose of his writing? See page 17 of this book.

We can not know positively what was Paul's fate. We know that during those two years in Rome "the care of all the churches" weighed heavily upon him, and from the four epistles probably written at this time—Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians—we know that he was blessed with the companionship of friends. Timothy and three others, Aristarchus, Jesus Justus, and Mark, who has been forgiven his defection at Antioch (15.39), were "a comfort" to him: Demas, a "fellow-worker," and Luke, "the beloved physician" were with him; Tychicus, whom he used as a messenger, Epaphras, who brought him news from Colossæ, Epaphroditus, who brought him a contribution from Philippi, and Onesimus, the runaway Christian slave of Colossæ, were among his visitors.

From Philemon 22, we know that Paul was expecting a speedy release, and it is generally believed that his expectation was realized. Tradition says that he visited Spain. From 1 Timothy and Titus (believed to have been written later than the first imprisonment) we learn that he went to Greece, Crete, Ephesus, and Macedonia, passing through Troas, and that he intended spending the winter at Nicopolis in Epirus. In July, 64, the greater part of Rome was burned over, and Nero, to avert suspicion from himself, accused the Christians of having set the fire. Multitudes of Christians were put to death after horrible tortures, many of them being burnt as torches in the emperor's gardens on the Vatican hill.

It is believed that Paul as the leader of the Nazarenes was arrested in Asia and hurried to Rome. Luke only was with him. He wrote to Timothy to come and bring Mark with him, but whether they arrived in time or not we do not know. He was condemned to death, and tradition says was led out along the Ostian Way and three miles from the city was beheaded. The date of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome was perhaps 60 and 61, and of his death 64 or 65. See the dates given on page 19 of this Guide.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Malta to Syracuse, on the eastern coast of Sicily, was a day's sail. Rhegium, the ship's next stopping place, is in Italy, opposite the extreme northeastern part of Sicily, from which it is separated by the southern entrance of the Straits of Messina. Puteoli, on the northern extremity of the Bay of Naples, called by Howson "the Liverpool of Rome," was the usual harbor for ships from the East carrying passengers or freight for the imperial city. From there the journey was by land to Rome. Twelve miles distant, at Capua, they would reach the celebrated Appian Way that had been traversed for five centuries by victorious armies. Forty-three miles from Rome was the Market of Appius, and ten miles farther on another station called the Three Taverns. Rome, the capital of the empire, is on the Tiber about fifteen miles from its mouth. At this time its population numbered 1,600,000.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What is our Golden Text? Paul says "I am not ashamed of the gospel," instead of saying "I am proud of the gospel," and there is a reason for his putting his faith in the gospel in these words. There was a time when he had been ashamed of the gospel; when was it? Before he had that vision of Christ on the way to Damascus he did not believe that Jesus was the Saviour, he would have been ashamed to belong to that little

company whose Saviour was the suffering, crucified Jesus, for his Saviour must be a great and powerful earthly king. What is the latter part of our Golden Text? These words explain why Paul changed his mind in regard to Jesus, he had seen His power and the power of His life and death. His own life had been an example of what that power could do through man. When he wrote his letter to the Romans, from which our Golden Text is taken, he was at Corinth and had never been to Rome. He wanted very much to go there, but he little knew in what way he should finally reach the city. Three months after the letter was sent on its way he was in a prison at Cæsarea. How long was he kept in that prison? How did it happen that he was sent from there to Rome? What had he endured on the way? Turn to your maps and let us follow his journey from Malta to Rome.

For Older Pupils. On the summit of a column one hundred and twenty feet high erected by Marcus Aurelius in a piazza near the center of Rome, a statue of Paul the Apostle has been placed. This is his memorial in the city of Rome. There are magnificent churches dedicated to St. Peter and St. Mark and several other saints, but there is no one of note dedicated to St. Paul. Near the Ghetto, or Jews' quarter, a building is shown to tourists as the traditional "hired house" where Paul lived (and the Church of St. Maria is also said to be the site of that house), while beneath a church near the Forum is the Mamertime Prison, the reputed place of Paul's second imprisonment for nine months together with Peter. Peter is honored, though some scholars doubt whether he was ever in Rome, but Paul is not, for his teachings are opposed to the dogmas of the papacy.

Outside the walls of Rome, a mile and a half away, over the spot where Paul was supposed to be buried, a church was erected during the reign of Constantine the Great in the fourth century. It has been many times restored. The present magnificent marble cathedral of "St. Paul's without the Walls" was erected in 1854. Another church on the Ostian Road marks the supposed place of his martyrdom. These are the present memorials of the great apostle who wrote to this city of Rome the Great Epistle to the Romans. In that letter he says he has often purposed going to Rome but has been as often hindered, and that a constant request of his prayers has been that it may be the will of God for him to come to them and that he may impart to them some spiritual gift. In our lesson text to-day we see how that great wish was granted, and under what circumstances he was with them, as far as the record in Acts tells us.

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Sympathy for the Strong

Paul's Need. As we have studied the life and words of Paul we have seen his wonderful courage, his marvelous power of endurance, his indomitable will, his great strength of character. He stands before our minds as one of the greatest moral heroes that ever lived. Can such a man be in any way dependent on others for encouragement and cheer?

> "There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
> In the place of their self-content;
> There are souls like stars, that dwell apart
> In a fellowless firmament—

but among them we can not place this great apostle Paul. He had a genius for friendship, and a genius for expressing it; his letters are filled with affectionate words to his friends and about his friends. He is never happy when he is "fellowless"; Luke, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus, Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla, and many others we know because they were Paul's dearly beloved companions. We have studied his beautiful words about love in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and have heard his counsel to the Romans to owe no man anything save to love one another. "If I love you more abundantly; am I loved the less?" he asks the Corinthians in his second letter to them. That this great man, who is so strong intellectually and morally and spiritually, feels the need of human love and sympathy and is not ashamed to let this

need be seen, is often indicated, but nowhere more clearly than in our lesson text for to-day. When the Christians from Rome come a distance of forty-three and thirty-three miles to meet him, he thanks God and takes courage. Those were the brethren whom he had "longed to see," and now he is assured that they have longed to see him, and he is encouraged and eager to begin his labor of love among them.

An Unrecognized Duty. Sympathy for the weak has been so hard to learn that few have advanced to the next step, or dreamed that it is a duty of the weak to bear the infirmities of the strong. For the strong men does not seem to need it. He stands there sturdily supporting the mighty weight that rests upon him, or moves ahead with seemingly unwearied sinews, breasting waves that we feel we could not face, unshaken amid disasters which for us would break up all the foundations of things. We give him our confidence, our admiration, our envy even; but we never think of sympathy. We are deficient in imagination, and the trials and sorrows and struggles of the heart beyond the mask we can not even fancy. Perhaps we are simply selfish. It may be that we modestly consider that our little help would be ineffective, our sympathy an impertinence. A little study of strength and strong men will show how mistaken we are. Again and again the love of friends, the courage of his wife the power of God's Spirit, must fill the hungry heart and rein-force the strength of Luther, who would face his duty "though it rained Duke Georges." And, supremely, the Son of Man, bearing the infirmities of "them that were his own" as well as the indifference and hate of those who opposed Him, loved to lean on the bosom of John, and exclaimed with a heart-break as he woke the troubled sleepers in Gethsemane, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

The "care of all the churches" rests on Paul. Luther must uphold the Reformation. To be a prop is exacting enough, but your great man must be a propellor as well, and a fountain also. This weakness round him is continually extracting strength. Whence shall he refill his fountain? At the ocean of divine energy, no doubt. But God has a way of making human sympathy the channel to His power. If a man is truly great among men, a force to comfort, to empower, to compel in the direction of spiritual advance, it is by virtue of his own sympathy with them, his power to enter into their wants and needs, the yearning of his own heart to bless. He is great in proportion to his sensitiveness, his force of feeling, his force of outgo. Every cell of his heart which so fiercely sends forth its riches, hungers for the arrival of like riches from his fellow-men. What he wants is the thrill of your comprehending love. And once in a while forget all about his being strong, and remember only that he is a man, needy, weak, tempted, longing for a human word of cheer. Condensed from an Editorial in the *Sunday-School Times.*

A Strong Man Helped. In the winter of 1864, an old Quaker lady visited Lincoln at the White House, and took the long-suffering giant's down-stretched hand. She had to rise on tiptoe, and as she did it her sweet voice uttered some words difficult to catch. It is not possible to give the words of either exactly, but this is their purport:

"Yes, friend Abraham, thee need not think thee stands alone. We are all praying for thee. The hearts of all the people are behind thee, and thee can not fail. The Lord has appointed thee, the Lord will sustain thee, and the people love thee. Yea, as no man was ever loved before, does this people love thee. Take comfort, friend Abraham. God is with thee. The people are behind thee."

The effect of the words was easy to see. As when the lights suddenly blaze behind a cathedral window, so the radiance illumined those rugged features and poured from the wonderful eyes. The gaunt form straightened. The mouth became beautiful in its sweetness, as it said to her: "You have given a cup of cold water to a very thirsty and grateful man. You have done me a great kindness." *The Youth's Companion.*

II All Things work for Good

What Paul accomplished during his Imprisonment. Paul had long hoped and prayed that he might preach the gospel in Rome, but the way had not

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opened for him; at last, after a long imprisonment at Cæsarea, and a long and perilous sea journey, he reached Rome a prisoner. This was not the way he had himself planned to come, but it proved a far better way for his great object of making known the gospel. Had he come to Rome a free man he never could have reached the Roman legions and Cæsar's household (Phil. 4.22) as he did through the soldiers to whom he was chained, one after another. In Philippians 1.12, 13, he recognizes this fact: "Now I would have you know, brethren," he writes, "that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole prætorian guard, and to all the rest." Then the example of his missionary activity from his place of confinement was a greater spur to the Christians in Rome than it could have been had he been free. His abode must have been their headquarters, and he further writes the Philippians that "Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear." And how much more he accomplished for all people in all lands and ages through the letters he had opportunity to write than he could have done by personal ministry! Epaphras, the minister at the Church of Colossæ in Phrygia, came to see Paul in his imprisonment and tell him about the false teachers who were disturbing that church, and Paul wrote them a letter (Epistle to the Colossians) warning them against dangerous doctrines and urging them to regulate their conduct by Christian principles. At another time Epaphroditus came with loving greetings and a gift from the church at Philippi, and Paul wrote them a tender and grateful letter, his "Love-letter to the Philippians." To the Ephesians he wrote "his sublimest letter," and to his friend Philemon at Colossæ his beautiful little letter asking pardon for the bearer, Onesimus, the slave who had stolen and run away from his master and had been convicted of sin by Paul's teachings. "Being such a one as Paul the aged and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus," he writes his friend, "I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and me." Profitable to thee and to me are these letters written by this prisoner of Jesus Christ, and profitable to him also, whose only desire was to know Christ and Him crucified. To them that love God all things work together for good.

God is His Own Interpreter. In Bedford, England, Dr. Wayland Hoyt looked long and earnestly at the jail door there preserved which for twelve years was locked on John Bunyan, and thought of the prayers that Bunyan must have pleaded behind it for its opening. "But how fruitful were those years!" he exclaims. "Dreams were going on behind that door, and the world needed them. When 'The Pilgrim's Progress' of which Bunyan dreamed had taken shape and tangibility, Bunyan's Lord, who had never for an instant forgotten him while the slow years passed, swung the jail door wide." In his prison at Athens, Socrates completed his great argument for immortality; in a Roman dungeon Galileo made some of his greatest discoveries. From his exile on the isle of Patmos John wrote the Book of Revelation. In his hiding place in Wartburg castle Luther translated the New Testament into the German language.

"God's ways seem dark, but, soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day;
The evil cannot brook delay;
The good can well afford to wait."

A Lesson to be Learned. To each and every soul life brings some heritage of good. It may not always be obvious good; it may not be the kind of good that lies on the surface; but more and more, as life goes on, the devout spirit grows into the conviction that the *all of life,* the total result of its experiences, is good.

We need to look for the hidden good, as well as the obvious good, in life. We need to establish the faith that everything that life brings us has some blessing in it; that there is good, not only in what at first seems good, but in what at first seems ill. God assigns us no lessons in the school of life that

are not divinely worth the learning. If we can only get at the heart of them, their hidden meaning, let us be assured that all experiences are blest.

It takes time, and a certain loving, loyal dwelling on that great word *Providence,* to convince the soul that there is an essential and discoverable blessing in every one of God's dealings with it. But by and by, through loyalty of faith, through prayers, through humble waiting for the message of God, and the soul does perceive how each experience of life adjusts itself, intelligibly and inspiringly, to a divine plan—God's plan for the spiritual refinement and development of the individual. *James Buchham,* in *The Heritage of Life.*

I know as my life grows older
And mine eyes have clearer sight,
That under each rank wrong somewhere
There lies a root of Right.
That each sorrow has its purpose,
By the sorrowing oft unguessed,
But as sure as the sun brings morning,
Whatever is is best. *Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

III Missionary Topic They came to him in Great Numbers

The Opportunity. We see Paul in the city to which all roads led, receiving and teaching the Jews and the Gentile Christians of the city and also those who came to him from all lands. The Roman soldiers went away from that abode to distant lands bearing with them the good news they learned, messengers from distant churches returned with special messages, and great numbers, no doubt, who had never heard of Jesus came to Paul's abode and were taught the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The opportunity that was Paul's is now ours. The evangelization of the millions of immigrants who come to our shores without a knowledge of Christ, the strengthening of the faith of those who are already loyal to the Word of God, and the aiding of all those in need, is the privilege and duty of this Christian nation. Lord, when saw we Thee hungry, and fed Thee? or athirst, and gave Thee drink? And when saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in? And the King shall answer, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me.

The Duty. Through immigration the United States is in a unique sense the most foreign country and the greatest mission field on the globe. "All peoples that on earth do dwell" have here their representatives, gathered by a divine ordering within easy reach of the gospel. The greatness of the opportunity is the measure of obligation. The manner in which our Christianity deals with the religious problems of immigration will decide what part America is to play in the evangelization of the nations abroad.

Home mission work of a distinctive character begins at the port of landing in the New World. At Ellis Island there are now some thirty missionaries, representing the leading Christian denominations. The hour of homesickness, of strangeness in a strange land, of perplexity and trouble, is the hour of hours when sympathy and help come most gratefully. The missionaries are on hand at this critical juncture. Thousands of immigrants are saved from falling into bad hands and evil associations through their zealous efforts. There should be a great interdenominational headquarters' building, thoroughly equipped for every kind of helpful service. A large force of trained workers of different nationalities should be employed, so that all kinds of needs might be met.

When the immigrant has passed through the gates, what attention is paid to him? Take it in the centers of population, where the masses of immigrants go, and the showing is not very imposing as yet. In New York City alone the Christian denominations ought to raise and expend at least a million dollars a year for city foreign evangelization, and this would be only a start in a work bound to extend indefinitely. The demand is imperative. Sixteen per cent. of the immigrants go home to live, and these can never forget what they saw here. Did we but teach them right, they would be an army of foreign missionaries, fifty thousand strong, preachers of the Gospel to the people in the tongue in which they were born. What an opportunity here is ours!

The very vastness of the home mission task is inspiring rather than discouraging to heroic souls. Difficulties will not hinder the American when once he is moved with the divine impulse, sees the thing to be done, and sets himself with God's help to do it. Condensed from a chapter in *Aliens or Americans,* by *Howard B. Grose.*

A Threshold Greeting. An Italian emigrant steamer, every available foot of its deck space crowded with sea-worn passengers, steamed into New York harbor, and was making its way up to a North River dock. Just in midstream a doublt-decked ferry-boat, laden with commuters from New Jersey suburbs of the big metropolis, slowed up to allow the steamer to cross its bows. For a moment or two the commuters, most of them New York business men on the way to their offices, stared with cool indifference at this ship-load of peasant foreigners, many of them fresh from the slavery of Sicilian sulphur mines, others from the worn-out, tax-ridden fields of Calabria. In mute wonder, much as might so many round-eyed oxen, the immigrants gazed at the prosperous-looking inhabitants of the new land to which they had come.

Then a young man on the upper deck of the ferry-boat, prompted perhaps by nothing better than a spirit of fun, waved a newspaper. That was enough. Those two thousand voyage-wearied peasants understood. The careless waving of the newspaper meant to them a friendly welcome from the kinsfolk of their adoption; it meant a cheery greeting from the land of the free. And how they did respond. In an instant the crowded decks blazed with color, became alive with motion. A thousand gay-hued handkerchiefs were in the air, a thousand battered hats were waving.

Across the narrow strip of water separating the two boats leaped the enthusiasm. It spread among the commuters. Cold indifference gave way to good-natured interest. Brokers, merchants, bankers, clerks, young women stenographers—all caught the spirit of the moment. Silk hats, derbies and white handkerchiefs were waved in answer to the salute of the poor immigrants. Between the two sets of passengers, of course, was still a wide social gap, but for a moment humanity bridged it clear and fair. *Youth's Companion.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Man proposes but God disposes.

Make us to meet what is or is to be
With fervid welcome, knowing it is sent
To serve us in some way full excellent,
Though we discern it all belatedly.

James Whitcomb Riley.

Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best.

Browning.

Oh, it is great to make some human hearts a little manfuller, happier, more blessed. *Carlyle.*

Implore His aid, in His decisions rest,
Secure, whate'er He gives, He gives the best.

Samuel Johnson.

O who will walk a mile with me
Along life's weary way?
A friend whose heart has eyes to see
The stars shine out o'er the darkening lea,
And the quiet rest at the end o' the day,—
A friend who knows, and dares to say,
The brave, sweet words that cheer the way
Where he walks a mile with me. *Henry van Dyke.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

After only three day's rest, Paul called together the chief of the Jews. The most difficult task before him, one that he naturally would most dread, was the conference with those Jewish authorities, and this was the first business to which he attended. Hanging over a business man's desk is the counsel, "Tackle the dread"—good counsel for every one. Let us follow it as Paul always did.

Notwithstanding all that he had suffered from his nation, all the cruelty and injustice and persecution he had endured, Paul tells these Jews of Rome of his appeal to Cæsar and adds, "Not that I had ought whereof to accuse my nation." Only a morally great man could be so magnanimous. Are you cultivating this noble spirit, or are you only too ready with your accusations?

If we can not be Pauls, we can be among those who give cheer and encouragement to others. Let us become encouragers.

Paul knew that to them that love God all things work together for good. May we all know, as Carlyle says, at all times, that verily the Eternal rules above us, and that nothing finally wrong has happened or can happen.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

When navigation began in the early spring, the shipwrecked company sailed from Malta in a ship from Alexandria, called "The Twin Brothers" from the sign painted on its prow. Three days were spent at Syracuse and a day at Rhegium on the way. The harbor of Puteoli was the destination of the ship. There a week was spent, and news of Paul's coming having reached the Christians at Rome, two companies came along the Appian Way to meet him, one going as far as the Market of Appius and the other on to the Three Taverns. Paul was greatly rejoiced and encouraged by their coming.

In Rome Paul was placed under the guard of a soldier and allowed to live by himself. The third day after his arrival he sent for the chief Jews, for he would learn their attitude toward him and disarm their prejudice toward his work if possible. He assured them that he was loyal to his nation and though he had appealed to Cæsar, after the Jews at Jerusalem had caused his arrest and the Romans had declared him innocent, he had no thought of accusing his nation to the Romans. It was his belief in the fulfilment of the hope of Israel that had led to his imprisonment.

The Jews denied having received any report concerning him from the Jerusalem Jews, and asked for information concerning this sect to which he belonged, of which they had heard much evil. When the day appointed for a conference arrived, a large company of Jews came to Paul's abode and from morning till evening he talked to them, proclaiming the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God and proving from the law of Moses and the prophets that Jesus is the Messiah. His hearers disagreed among themselves as to his message, some of them believing and others disbelieving, and Paul dismissed them with the words of Isaiah, telling them that they had stopped their ears and closed their eyes for they would not hear and believe, and solemnly assuring them that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and they will hear. For two years Paul lived under guard in his own hired house, and boldly taught those who came to hear him about the Lord Jesus Christ, for whom he had been a witness in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Rome of Nero's Day.

2. The Problem of the Immigrant. See "One Man and his Town" in the January, 1908, *McClure's Magazine*, and "The Gateway of the Nation" and "The Keepers of the Gate" in the *Outlook* for Dec. 28, 1907.

3. The new Acts of the Apostles is now being written. He who realizes that the God within the Bible is the God within our own perplexed life, individual, social, national, and dares apply the visions of the old time to the problems of the new, is in the true apostolic succession. *W. H. P. Faunce.*

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR NEXT LESSON

1. Review the lesson of Paul at Corinth, the 5th lesson of third quarter. 2. From 2 Cor. 10.10; 11.5, 9-15, 18, what do you infer made it necessary to glory, as he says in 12.1 in his second letter to the Corinthians? 3. When was this letter probably written? 4. What events in the Acts had not then occurred? (Those in Chapters 20-28.) 5. When is self-praise not expedient, 12.1? 6. When is it expedient? 7. Write in a column the list of sufferings endured which Paul gives, and after each one give references to the passages in the Acts which are examples of each.

PAUL'S STORY OF HIS LIFE

Read Second Corinthians 11.21-12.10. Commit verses 24, 25.

Golden Text

And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. II Cor. 12.9.

LESSON TEXT 2 Cor. 11.22-28; 12.1-10.

22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; 26 *in* journeyings often, *in* perils of rivers, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils from *my* countrymen, *in* perils from the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; 27 *in* labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.

12 1 I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth), 3 how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 On behalf of such a one will I glory: but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in *my* weaknesses. 6 For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth: for I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or heareth from me. 7 And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. 8 Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for *my* power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

22. *Are they Hebrews? They* refers to Paul's adversaries at Corinth, the false apostles as he calls them, verses 12-15. They seem to have claimed authority over the Gentiles at Corinth because they belonged to the ancient covenant people, and Paul says he can make the same claim for himself. . . . *Hebrews* is the oldest name of God's chosen people, the one which in the Old Testament distinguishes them from the native people of Canaan, and in the New Testament distinguishes the Hebrew (or Aramaic) speaking Jews from those Jews who spoke also the Greek language, as in Acts 6.1.—*Are they Israelites? Israelites* is from *Israel*, the sacred name given by God to Jacob, the ancestor

THE APPIAN WAY AT THE PRESENT TIME

Over which St. Paul passed from Puteoli to Rome. It well deserves the appellation "Queen of Roads," for after more than two thousand years it can be traced by the fragments of pavement, tombs, and ancient milestones. One of the best preserved tombs is this of Caecilia Metella. St. Paul, as he passed by, saw it in its original beauty, encased in marble.

whom they all claimed, see ..... There were sons of Abraham who were descendants of Esau; the chosen people were descendants of Jacob. See Rom. 9.4. *The seed of Abraham.* This phrase recalls the blessings promised by God to Abraham's descendants. In Phil. 3.5 Paul adds that he was of the tribe of Benjamin and a Pharisee.

23. *Are they ministers?* This is their boast, and they seem to have questioned Paul's right to be called a minister or an apostle because he had not seen Jesus Christ on earth, 1 Cor. 9.1. Paul claims to be more of a minister than they, and gives his proofs.—The parenthetical clause is an introductory apology for boasting of what he has endured for the cause of Christ.—*In prisons.* Three imprisonments are mentioned in the Acts, and only one before the date of this letter, that recorded in Acts 16.24.—*Stripes.* See Acts 16.23.—*In deaths often.* See Rom. 8.36. Of course the meaning is that he was often in danger of his life.

24. *Of the Jews five times.* The one beating recorded in the Acts was by Gentiles.—*Forty stripes save one.* The legal number, Deut. 25.3.

25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods.* One case is recorded in Acts 16.22,23.—*Once was I stoned.* Acts 14.19.—*Thrice I suffered shipwreck.* The one shipwreck recorded in Acts occurred later than the date of this letter.

26. *Perils from my countrymen.* Acts 8.23; 13.45,50; 14.5; 17.5,13; 18.12 and (later than the writing of the letter) 20.3,19; 21.27; 23.10,12; 25.3.—*In perils from the Gentiles.* Acts 14.5, 19; 13.23; (also 27.42).—*Among false brethren.* Gal. 2.4.

27. *In labor.* 1 Thess. 2.9; 2 Thess. 3.8.—*In watchings.* Acts 16.25; 20.7, 11, 31.—*Hunger and thirst.* 1 Cor. 4.11; Phil. 4.12.—*Fastings.* Acts 6.5.—*Nakedness.* 1 Cor. 4.11.

28. *Besides.....without.* Margin, *Besides the things which I omit.*

12.1. *I must needs glory.* Ye compelled me, verse 11, by listening to my detractors, the false prophets.—*Though it is not expedient.* Paul feels the necessity of saying what he recognizes is not becoming to say.—*I will come to visions.* In the last two verses of the last chapter Paul had begun a recital of adventures which might have been prolonged, but he breaks it off and proceeds to an account of God's blessings.

2. *A man in Christ.* Paul the writer speaks of himself in the third person. "*In Christ* implies a spiritual union with Him, and is richer in meaning than *a disciple of Christ,* or *a Christian*" (*Drummond*). *Fourteen years ago.* The occasion is not elsewhere mentioned.—*Whether in the body or whether out of the body.* "This implies that he was in an ecstatic condition and unconscious of his bodily surroundings" (*Drummond*).—*The third heaven.* Compare Deut. 10.14; Psa. 148.4. See page 408 for this phrase and *unspeakable* words of verse 4.

5. *Such an one.* "Paul's rapture was so utterly independent of his own effort and merit that the raptured person seemed to be some one other than himself, and the lapse of time made this conception more easy to him. Ourselves long 10.14; Psa. 148.4. See page 408 for this phrase and *unspeakable* words of See verse 9.

6. *I shall not be foolish.* He could boast of the wonderful revelations granted him and he would be speaking only the truth, and therefore would not be talking foolishly.—*Lest any man.* Paul speaks of these revelations lest his enemies might suppose they had cause to think meanly of him, and he forbears to speak further of them lest his friends should think too highly of him" (*Clark*).

7. Verses 5 and 6 are parenthetical; 7 continues verse 4.—*A thorn in the flesh.* Some affliction, we know not what.

8. *The Lord.* Christ.—*Thrice.* Some see in this numeral a definite for an indefinite number, meaning only *often;* others see a reference to the three petitions of Christ in Gethsemane.

SUGGESTIVE WORDS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

4. *He was caught up into Paradise.* God enters the world along the line of the inspired touch that He puts upon some human soul. Men are taken up into the high places of the earth, shown things that eye hath not seen, told things that ear hath not heard; taken up men and then let down angels of power and

deliverance, molders of men, shapers of events, generals of history. *Charles H. Parkhurst,* in *Association Men.*

8. *I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.* The burden remained, but the apostle was strengthened! "Mostly gladly therefore I glory in my weakness." This is the way of the Lord. Some burdens are permitted to remain. Perhaps the burden is an unwelcome and unpleasant duty. Perhaps it is some physical infirmity. Perhaps it is prolonged labor in a wageless and most exhausting sphere. What then will God do with us? "He shall sustain thee." The Lord will deal with the bearer of the burden. He will increase thy strength, and so in reality diminish thy load. This word "sustain" is a fine wealthy word of most comforting content. There is in it a suggestion of the ministry of a nurse. He will deal with us as though we were infants. He will be to us the great mother-God, and he will manifest towards us all the tenderness of a nursing ministry. There is also in the word the suggestion of food. He will feed us. He will give to us the bread of life. He will increase our vitality. He will make our powers more alive, more wakeful, more exuberant. And I find in the word the further gracious meaning of "support." He will carry me, if need be. "Hold Thou me up!" cries one of the Psalmists. The word indicates one of the beautiful ministries of our Lord. We have seen the strong elder son taking the arm of his weakly mother, and holding her up. The kindly service is illustrative of the helpful fellowship of God. "He is at thy right hand." *J. H. Jowett,* in *Thirsting for the Springs.*

10. *For Christ's sake.*

"This for the Master's sake I do"—
Ah, magic words to make life sweet!
Devotion, utter, single, true,
Solves all, blends all, crowns all complete. *James Buckham.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *In deaths often.* All Eastern people are given to the use of hyperbole, or exaggeration. Of course the meaning here is that he was often in danger of death or near death, as when he was stoned at Lystra and as his tormentors thought killed. In verse 27 *nakedness* is probably another instance of the same exaggeration, for an oriental would speak of himself as naked if he were without his *abba,* or outer cloak.

24. *Five times received I forty stripes save one.* The law according to Deut. 25.3 allowed forty stripes, but it was customary to omit one lest a mistake in counting might have been made. The Mishna describes the way in which the blows were given: The two hands of the criminal are bound to a post, and then the servant of the synagogue either pulls or tears off his clothes till he leaves his breast and shoulders bare. A stone or block is placed behind him, on which the servant stands; he holds in his hands a scourge, made of leather, divided into four tails. He who scourges lays one-third on the criminal's breast, another third on his right shoulder, and another on his left. The man smites with all his strength with one hand.

25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods.* This was the Roman punishment; the stripes were the Jewish. Though it was against the law to beat a Roman citizen, the law was sometimes disregarded, and Paul may not have declared his citizenship, as he did not in the instance recorded in Acts 16.22.

26. *In perils of rivers.* The swiftly flowing rivers in time of flood were dangerous to cross. Frederick Barbarossa was drowned on his crusade while attempting to cross the Calycadnus, a river not far from Paul's city of Tarsus.

26. *In perils of robbers.* A number of inscriptions near the site of Pisidian Antioch show the extreme insecurity that prevailed. There is an epitaph erected by Patroklos and Douda over the grave of their son Souson, slain by robbers. Another refers to armed policemen, and a third to a *stationarius,* whose duty it was to catch runaway slaves turned brigands. *Caroline A. Skeel,* in *Travel in the First Century.*

2. *The third heaven.* The prevailing belief in seven heavens was founded on astronomical appearances, a sphere being assumed for each of the seven planets. Those heavens, or some of them, were assigned, in Jewish speculation, to various orders of spirits. In the curious "Book of the Secrets of Enoch"

paradise is placed in the third heaven, and with this view the present passage seems to agree. *James Drummond.*

Schoettgen has shown that *ascending to heaven* or *being caught up to heaven,* is a form of speech among the Jewish writers, to express the highest degree of inspiration. They often say of Moses that he ascended on high, ascended to heaven, when it is evident that they mean only that he was favored with the nearest intimacy with God, and the highest revelations of His will. *Adam Clarke.*

4. *Words which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* The Jews thought the divine name which in our Revised Version is given as Jehovah too sacred to utter; they substituted for it the Hebrew word translated *LORD* in the St. James version. When Paul says that he heard words not lawful to utter, he may have meant thus to convey the inexpressible sacredness of the revelation, the exceeding greatness of the revelations as he says in verse 7.

7. *A thorn in the flesh.* This is a common oriental expression for a constant affliction of any sort. If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then shall those that ye let remain of them be as pricks in your eyes, and as thorns in your sides, and they shall vex you, Num. 33.55. And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor a hurting thorn of any that are round about them, Ezek. 28.24.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Enemies of Paul had been trying to undermine his authrity in the church at Corinth by discrediting his claims as an apostle, and chapters X-XIII of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians contain his vindication. Our lesson text begins with a statement of the particulars in which he claims all that his opponents claim for themselves, and then proceeds to other credentials of his mission which no one but he could offer. For the date and place in which Second Corinthians was written and its contents see page 23 of this book.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you like a person who brags or boasts of what he has done or can do? Some one has said that such a person is talking about himself when we want to talk about ourselves! Both our words *brag* and *boast* come to us from words that mean *to make a noise,* and Webster says that *to bluster, to crow, to talk big* mean the same thing as *to brag* or *to boast,* and his definition of these words is "to talk about one's self, or about things about one's self, for the purpose of arousing in others admiration, wonder, or envy." We often have to talk about ourselves, but it is the way in which we talk and the purpose for which we talk that determine whether we are talking foolishly or not. If you should move to another city, and on making arrangements to enter a new school should be asked just what you had studied and what your report cards had said, it would not be bragging for you to give all that information, even though you had to say that you received the highest mark in every one of your studies, but if you should tell this to people who had no interest in knowing it, and your purpose in the telling should be to have them compliment you on being so excellent a scholar, that would be boasting.

Paul was far from being a boaster, and it is fortunate for us that, in order to answer the attacks made upon him by his enemies, and to prove to the Church at Corinth that he was God's messenger, he was forced to write them who he was, what he had endured for the cause of Christ, and what revelations God had granted him.

(In classes that have been regular in attendance this lesson furnishes an excellent opportunity for a spirited review of Paul's life and character as studied in the Acts. For other classes the topic of boasting will be profitable.)

For Older Pupils. What account is given in the Acts of Paul at Corinth? (Chap. 18.) What led Paul to write his first letter to the church he founded there? What led to the writing of the second letter? (See "The Epistles to the Corinthians" in the Introduction of this book.) The story of his life in this second letter which the apostle gives in answer to his opponents, contains references to many events not recorded in the Acts. The letter was written

before any of the calamities recorded in Acts 20-28 occurred. From the earlier history of the Acts, though we know that Paul suffered much and severely, we do not realize the extent of the perils and persecutions he endured as we do in reading this summary in this epistle. We see from this how fragmentary is the biography of Paul in the Acts. He is the hero of so many of its chapters that we are in danger of forgetting that the historian's purpose is the portrayal of the spread of the gospel, rather than an account of the life of the chief apostle. A German writer (Hausrath) has well said that these words of Paul in the eleventh chapter of Second Corinthians suggest the picture of an old general who bares his breast before his rebellious legions, and shows them the wound-prints which prove that he is not unworthy to be called their commander.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Boasting

For Christ's Sake. Paul's mind seems to be troubled in writing these words to the Corinthians; he who at all times gives Christ the glory, who declares that he glories in his weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon him, that he takes pleasure in weakness, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for when he is weak then he is made strong through Christ's power, is nevertheless constrained to write about his credentials as an ambassador of Christ in a way which he fears may be taken for boasting. Would that ye could bear with me in a little foolishness, he writes, and then he tells them his fear is that their minds may be corrupted by the false teachers who have disparaged his own authority. Surely we acquit Paul of any boastful words as we read his recital of the labors and sufferings endured "above measure", and of the wonderful revelations made to him. How different is he from Nehemiah, that Old Testament prophet who with all his genuine devoutness, recounts his good deeds and three times exclaims, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this" (Neh. 13). To blow one's own trumpet makes poor music, it is true, but to blow that trumpet when necessary to summon others to wage righteous warfare makes music that rings sure and true. Hear now, ye rebels; shall *we* bring you forth water out of this rock? questioned Moses on that one occasion when he incurred God's displeasure. When I am weak, then am I strong, I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me, for he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power is made perfect in weakness, are Paul's oft recurring thoughts.

The truly Great are truly Humble. The greater progress a Christian makes spiritually the less he is inclined to boast, because the more clearly he sees that not he, but God, is the source of whatever natural gifts or successes are his. As Cotton Mather was wont to say, when God renews His image in us he pulls down our proud thoughts.

Bishop Phillips Brooks, who was himself one of the humblest as well as the greatest of God's workers, explains how this is brought about. "Christianity," he says, "does not set men at any work of mere resolution, saying, 'Come now, let us be humble'; but true Christianity puts men face to face with the humbling facts, the great realities, and then humility comes upon the soul as darkness comes on the face of the earth, not because the earth has made up its mind to be dark, but because it has rolled into the great shadow."

Listen to what Ruskin in "Modern Painters" says on this subject. "The first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility doubt of his own power, or hesitation of speaking his opinions, but a right understanding of the world's doings and sayings. All great men not only know their own business, but usually know that they know it, and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them, only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows that he can build a good dome at Florence; Albrecht Dürer writes calmly to one who has found fault with his work, "It can not be done better"; Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else, only they do not expect their fellowmen to fall down and worship them. They have a curious undersense of powerlessness, feeling that the

power is not in them, but through them, that they could not do or be anything else than God made them, and they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet."

An Impious Boaster. Mr. Moody has told a striking incident about the swift retribution that came to a young man who gloried in his own strength. He was an all-round athlete, who could run faster, jump farther and lift more than any one with whom he matched his powers. One evening on his return from a great victory he was led by the singing to enter a church prayer-meeting. The topic was spiritual strength, and he listened impatiently and then indignantly to the pastor's words about the weakness and insufficiency of human power compared with divine power. Suddenly springing to his feet and baring his great arms before the people, he exclaimed, "Look here! I could raise up a benchful of you with ease. The power you talk about can't do that. God may hurt you, but He can't hurt me," and then he strode out into the tempest that was raging. All present were too shocked by such a presumptuous boast to say a word. Then a wild cry was heard, and two men who ran out to ascertain its cause came back bearing in their arms this young boaster, now insensible from a wound on his head. The wind had loosened a tile from a building near by, and as the young fellow strode by in his arrogant pride it was hurled against his head as if from an unerring hand. For days it was not thought that he could live, and a year of invalidism followed for him. Probably the swift punishment was only a coincidence, but very naturally did it seem to those who heard his boast as if it had been sent by God. "God does not ordinarily punish with such dramatic celerity men who boast of their independence of Him. Nevertheless, in a thousand ways He declares His dominion over us."

II Thorns in the Flesh

The Lesson Paul learned. What was Paul's thorn in the flesh for whose departure he wrestled with God in prayer? From his letters we infer that it seemed to be a hindrance to his work. An affliction of the eyes, a stammering speech, an unimposing presence, a recurrent fever—these and many other speculations have been made in regard to it, but it is futile to speculate on what may not be known. To ponder how he bore it, however, is most fruitful. He learned the reason for its "buffeting" and discovered that instead of being a hindrance to his work it was in reality a help, for "Christ's power is made perfect in weakness" and the weaker he was the more plainly could others see the divine power working through him. When he realized this great truth he was content, instead of rebelling at the pricking thorn he rejoiced in it, instead of groaning he began glorying, because thereby God was glorified.

How One Thorn in the Flesh was endured. No one is free from his thorn in the flesh. There are fortunate mortals who seem to others to possess all that is worth having in life, and to be without trouble, but true it is that each heart knows its own bitterness. The thorns differ in size and sharpness, but no one who lives long fails to feel their torture.

Tom Pippet was a little fellow—so runs the story in the *Youth's Companion*—and every one could literally "look down" upon him. Every boy who has himself a physical defect can understand how mighty a matter this lack of size had seemed to Tom. There were such great deeds to be done, and he felt that he could do them, only—he stood but five feet in his boots. It was hopeless to try to be a hero. His name, too, was unfortunate. The boys changed it to Poppet, to Pipes, to Pipkin, to Pint. It was easy to be witty at the expense of the little fellow. One day an old professor, seeing him shrink at some gibe, said to him, "Tom, there is a Something within you with which your little body has nothing to do. Show that to the world. Ignore and disregard your size, and you will teach others to ignore and disregard it." This kindly word was the pebble which turned the stream of Tom's life into a new channel. He had thus far failed from very despair to try to make something of himself; he now began to study vigorously. He was a born orator, and his voice was fine. The class soon began to be proud of him, and to boast of his size as another reason for their approval of him. When his small figure appeared on the platform on Commencement day, the storm of applause which greeted him was

due as much to his triumph over his physical defect as to the actual work which he had done.

III Missionary Topic My Grace is Sufficient for Thee

The Testimony of James Chalmers, the Martyr Missionary of New Guinea. Recall the twenty-one years of my missionary life, give me back all its experiences, give me its shipwrecks, give me its standing in the face of death, give it me surrounded with savages with spears and clubs, give it me back with spears flying about me, with the club knocking me to the ground, give it me back again and I will still be your missionary.

The Testimony of Robert Moffatt, who labored for Fifty-four Years among the Bechuanas and Other African Tribes. I would willingly go back. I have toiled there at work by day and by night, under a vertical sun; I have there been exposed to hunger and thirst; I have often had to put on what I call the fasting girdle, but I never complained. I knew that the work in which I was engaged was the work to which God in His merciful Providence had appointed me, and I knew that if I labored and did not faint I should surely reap!

The Testimony of David Livingstone, the Explorer and Missionary who gave his Life for Darkest Africa. People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of the great debt owing to our God, whom we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blest reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? Away with the word in such a view, and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver and the soul to sink, but let this be only for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in, and for us.

SENTENCE SERMONS

The good are better made by ill
As odors crushed are sweeter still. *Rogers.*

God never makes us feel our weakness except to lead us to seek strength from Him. *Fênelon.*

In my own hands my want and weakness are,
My strength, O God, is Thine. *Bayard Taylor.*

In the world's broad field of battle, in the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle; be a hero in the strife!
Longfellow.

Men never take the conceited man at his own valuation. *H. W. Mabie.*

O fear not in a world like this,
And then shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong. *Longfellow.*

Well to suffer is divine. *Whittier.*

Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works. *Shakespeare.*

Not from my torch, the gleam,
But from the stars above. *Henry van Dyke.*

I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me. Phil. 4.15.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Your thorn in the flesh is—what? Whatever it be that disorders, annoys, grieves you, makes life look dark, and your heart dumbly ache, or wets your eyes with bitter tears—counselled Samuel Longfellow, brother of our poet—look at it steadily, look at it deeply, look at it in the thought of God and His purpose of good, and already the pain of it will begin to brighten.

Of what are you inclined to boast? Blue blood, beauty, strength, wealth, talent? He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord, for not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

My grace is sufficient for thee. Do you live as you would if you fully believed this? Are you a timid, discouraged, hopeless Christian? Are you a self-confident, self-trusting Christian? Or are you a strong, God-trusting Christian?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Paul's account of his sufferings is forced from him by the malicious misrepresentations of opponents known to us only through this reply. They were Jews who prided themselves on their descent from the sacred people. Paul, like them, can glory in being a Hebrew, an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham. They claim to be ministers of Christ; Paul has a far greater claim to this title, greater than theirs, as he proved, first by the extraordinary list of calamities which he gives,—labors, imprisonments, and often almost death itself, having received five beatings from the Jews and three from the Romans, having been once stoned and three times shipwrecked, and at one time a night and a day in great danger on the sea, and having endured great perils on his journeys, from swollen rivers, from robbers, from his own countrymen, and also from the Gentiles, in the city, in the wilderness, on the sea, among false brethren, in labors and watchings, and hunger and thirst, and cold and nakedness. Besides all these sufferings he has been continually beset with anxiety for all the churches, for when one member is spiritually weak and stumbles in his Christian life, he himself sorrows. He must needs glory, but only concerning his own weakness, and he appeals to God that he speaks the truth in what he is about to relate.

Then Paul speaks of a peril which occurred at the very beginning of his Christian ministry, when the governor of Damascus sought to sieze him and he was let down from the city walls in a basket and made his escape, but this train of thought he interrupts by saying that he must boast, even though he disapproves of boasting, but it shall be by giving his second proof of his right to his claim of being a minister of Christ, the marvelous credentials given him in the visions and revelations of the Lord. So long ago it happened, fourteen years, that it seems as if it were another person of whom he is speaking, as he recalls the wondrous moment when, unconscious of all earthly surroundings, he was exalted to the highest heaven and there heard words too holy for human utterance. He could indeed glory in having been granted such visions, for he should be speaking only the truth, but he wished to be judged only by what others could see and hear for themselves. That he himself should not be overexalted by having had such great revelations, he had been given a thorn in the flesh to torment him, some trouble which he had repeatedly besought the Lord to remove, but He had taught him its purpose was to show in his human weakness his Lord's divine power, for Christ's grace is sufficient for him. Now he is content to keep it, exulting in the weakness and persecutions endured for Christ's sake, because they bring Christ's strength. When he is weak in himself, he is strong through Christ.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Self reliance and reliance on God.
2. The apostle Paul, his intellectual and spiritual greatness, his service to the cause of Christ.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Review our last temperance lesson. 2. What principle did Paul there give for determining conduct in regard to things lawful in themselves? 3. Read the eighth chapter of First Corinthians. 4. Write an analysis of the fourteenth Chapter of Romans. 5. What did Christ say in the Sermon on the Mount about judging? (Matt. 7.1-5.) 6. Is it ever right to act contrary to the dictates of conscience? 7. Mention some of your rights which you ought not to use. 8. Commit to memory verses 12, 13, 16, 17, 21.

PAUL ON SELF-DENIAL—WORLD'S TEMPERANCE LESSON

Read Romans 14.10-21. Commit verses 19, 20.

Golden Text

It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. Rom. 14.21.

LESSON TEXT Rom 14.10-21

10 But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought they brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God. 11 For it is written,

As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow,
And every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. 14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. 19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. 20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *to do anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

10. *Thou.* Who eateth not, verse 3. "The weak" were judging those who did not share their scruples.—*Thy brother.* Who eateth.—*Or thou again.* Who *eateth.* "The strong" were despising those who held such scruples.—*Thy brother.* Who eateth not.—*Set at nought.* Despise.—*For we shall all stand .....God.* God, not man, is Judge.

11. A quotation from Isa. 45.23, confirming the statement in the last verse that *all* shall stand before God.—*Confess to God.* Margin, give praise. See Phil. 2.11.

12. *So then.* The last two verses lead to this conclusion. Verses 4 and 10 speak of man's judging man; when man realizes his own accountability to God, verse 12, he will realize his unfitness to judge another. Sinful men must be judged by the proper human judges (Rom. 16.17; 1 Cor. 5.3), but not every man should venture to judge his neighbor's actions.

13. *Let us not therefore judge one another any more.* Verse 3; Matt. 7.1.—*That no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way.* 1 Cor. 8.8-13.—*Occasion of falling.* The two expressions, *stumbling block* and *occasion of falling,* are seemingly synonymous, though the first may be taken to mean a hindrance and the second something that actually throws a brother down in his life's course. Rom. 9.33; Lev. 19.14.

14. *I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus.* As a "Pharisee of the Pharisees" Paul had strictly kept all the Levitical law (Lev. 11); his knowledge

that nothing is unclean of itself had come to him through his fellowship with Jesus Christ, his living as His follower, as a Christian. Matt. 7.1-23; Acts 10.15.—*To him who accounteth anything to be unclean.* 1 Cor. 8.7..—*Unclean.* That which was forbidden by the Levitical law was called κοινον, common, unclean, as opposed to that which could be lawfully eaten and was therefore pure or holy.

15. *Because of meat.* Because of meat you have eaten which had been offered to idols.—*Thou walkest no longer in love.* Eph. 5.2.—*Destroy not.....died.* 1 Cor. 8.11. "Do not think more of your food than Christ thought of His life" (*Bengel*).

16. If you exercise your Christian liberty of eating anything, which is a good, and thereby offend another whose conscience will not allow him to eat food offered to idols, then others will speak evil of your liberty. It is too great a price to pay for a matter of so little importance.

17. This verse shows what is essential and what unessential. See 1 Cor. 8.8.—*The kingdom of God.* The kingdom of God is within you, Luke 17.21.

18. *Herein.* In righteousness, peace and joy, elements of a Christian character, verse 17. See 2 Cor. 8.21.

19. *So then.* The conclusion from verses 17 and 18, is that we must consider the effect our conduct will have on others.—*Edify.* Build up.

20. *Overthrow...*Pull down, the opposite of *edify.*

21. *The work of God.* "The Christian brother, God's work" (*Vincent*).—*All things.* All food, Paul is here speaking of. Verse 14; 1 Cor. 8.9-12.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

10. *The judgment-seat of God.* In 2 Cor. 5.10, we read "the judgment-seat of Christ." This is explained by the statement in Rom. 2.16, that God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ, and in the speech of Paul, in Acts 17.31, that God will judge the world by the man whom He has ordained. Here, as he is about to quote from Isa. 45.23, he refers only to the supreme Judge, without reference to the Agent. *Henry Drummond.*

12. *Each one of us shall give account of himself to God.* Each of the life-saving men who guard our coast, when he keeps the patrol on stormy nights, gives in at the end of his long, lonely march, a token that he has faithfully accomplished his work. Another of the life-saving crew, in the midst of the night and tempest, may give him comfort and aid, may cheer and encourage him, but he must finish his own march and give in his own token. No man can do that for him.

We each have our march to make in life, often through dark and cold ways, and we must render in our account to the great Commander alone. It will not help the worldly old man on that day that he has a child with God's angels in heaven, nor the vicious young man that he has a praying, loving mother. Each soul must pass into the unseen world, not simply alone, but molded and ingrained by the acts, and habits, and preferences of the life it has left behind. What will follow? Each of us must know, sooner or later, for ourselves. *Youth's Companion.*

15. *If because of thy meat thy brother is grieved.* To-day the question centers about drink. Even yet there are Christian men who practically insist on their right to use wine. Paul would surely write to-day about wine what he wrote about meat; that, while it is not morally unclean in itself, except to him who so esteems it, yet he who uses it is not walking according to love ("charitably"), inasmuch as his use of it is a grief to many and leads others to fall. Paul's plea, which is the Holy Spirit's, is unanswerable and irresistible. To deny the liberty is to take all the virtue and force from the abstinence. To refuse to do for the good of others what one has a right to do is love of the highest character—it is Christ-like. *James M. Stifler,* in *The Epistle to the Romans.*

16. *Let not then your good be evil spoken of.* What is the good of a religion that lets me look down upon men who are in darkness, and only congratulate myself that I am in the light? I must have a religion of practical sympathy with the blindness of men, of tender care for their prejudices, of love strong enough to help them to the uttermost against their temptations and against their sins. I must follow Paul's counsel, do all things unto edifying. *G. H. Knight.*

19. *Edify One Another.* Our pleasure is not to overbalance another man's life, but neither is his pleasure to overbalance our life. We may regard his conscience, but we may not make it our lawgiver. If I may never do anything to which the conscience of some neighbor objects, I can never do anything. The whole principle of life is summed up in the one counsel, "Let us follow after the things which make for peace and the things whereby we may build one another," *i. e.* in the divine life. All comes back to this at last, How shall we best promote the divine life in ourselves and others? The divine life is the source of all truly righteous conduct; the divine life is the standard by which all conduct is to be tested. *Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life and Letters of Paul.*

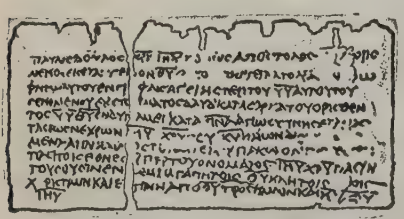
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In our second temperance lesson of this year we had a passage from the 13th chapter of Romans, in which Paul declared that love is the fulfilment of the law. In the 14th chapter he refers to troublesome questions that had arisen in the Christian community at Rome, where there were both "strong" and "weak" Christians. The "strong" Christians' faith allowed them to eat all things; the "weak" ones believed in eating only herbs. There were different opinions also among them as to which day of the week should be observed as the Sabbath, the Hebrew Christians keeping the seventh day, the Gentile Christians the first, some probably keeping both days and others keeping neither day. In his letter to the Corinthians, our last temperance lesson, Paul gave a principle which should guide one in determining the advisability of a course of conduct in itself lawful—one should seek not his own but his neighbor's good. In this chapter of Romans he urges the same thought, the duty of self-denial on behalf of others.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A big dog once taught Professor Dager a lesson. He had taken a long walk through the country, and this dog had gone with him, and easily jumped from bank to bank of a deep gully they crossed, but on this particular day the dog refused to cross in this way. Instead, he ran a quarter of a mile to a spot where he could go down a path and then up on the other side and back again to Professor Dager. What do you suppose was the reason for this? There was a little dog with him this time, and he knew that if he jumped across the little dog would try it and would fall in, so he took the trouble to go that long way around for the sake of his small companion. This is the lesson that Paul teaches in the words of his letter to the Romans that we study to-day, that we must sometimes give up our own comfort or pleasure for the sake of others who would be harmed if we did not deny ourselves.

For Older Pupils. Among the ruins of Oxyrhynchus, an ancient Greek city in Egypt, one hundred and twenty miles south of Cairo, the members of the Egyptian Exploration Fund discovered many manuscripts. Our illustration reproduces one of them, a copy of the first seven verses of the Epistle to the Romans. There are mistakes in spelling and the writing is crude, and scholars who have examined it think that it was a copy made by a schoolboy as one of his school exercises, probably in the time of Constantine, about 316 A. D. and therefore the oldest manuscript now known of any of Paul's writings. Where did Paul write this letter? When? Why? (See the Epistle to the Romans, page 24 of this Guide.)



A Reduced Facsimile of the First Seven Verses of Romans. Probably Written by a Schoolboy in the Fourth Century.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Occasioners of Stumbling

Harmful Example. Let no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. Great is the power of example. If a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? questions Paul. If a man see you, who are strong of will and self-control, drink spirituous liquors in moderation without harm to yourself, will not he who is weak of will and without self-control be emboldened to drink to excess? Have you then no responsibility for your brother's downfall? Your example as one whom drink does not harm may be a far greater stumbling block to others than the example of one who drinks to excess.

From the *Century Magazine* comes this dialogue:

"I positively decline to have that young clippercut in my house again. His influence on my son is most dangerous."

"Why, my friend, he is far from being a bad fellow. He has his follies, I admit, but how unlike such really vicious men as Grogster, Cardflip, and Ponyback."

"Sir, the only danger of a sunken rock is that it is not sunk deep enough."

He knew not His Power.

He toiled on the street for his daily bread,
Jostled and pushed by the surging throng.
"No one has time to watch," he said,
"Whether I chose the right or the wrong;
No one can be by me misled."

He chose the wrong, and thought no one cared;
But a child lost that day his ideal of strength;
A cynic sneered at the soul ensnared;
A weak man halted, faltered, at length
Followed him into the sin he had dared.

George Lee Burton.

Who is Guilty? A country town in one of our Middle States in which is a sectarian college, was startled by the suicide of one of the college students. He had become a confirmed drunkard; and enfeebled in mind and body, conscious that his career in college was over, afraid to go home, in despair he sought death. His brother was sent for to take the body home. He found the president of the college, and said to him: "My mother three years or more ago sent you her youngest son, her Benjamin. He was a healthy, honorable boy, who, when he left home, had never touched a drop of liquor. There is nothing to carry back to her but this poor, diseased body. Who has done this? Who is guilty?"

The venerable president was deeply moved. "Not I," he said. "The faculty was interested in him. When he began to go astray they remonstrated with him. I pleaded with him. Every influence that we could exert was brought to bear. But he went down as if drawn by some invisible hand."

Whose was this hand? As the dead boy was carried down the street a pretty young girl looked out of a window of her home, and saw the hearse. She remembered how, nearly three years ago, vexed at his blindness to her charms and his eagerness for study, she had used all her little wiles to attract him; how she had succeeded; how mad he was in his admiration of her.

There was a club in the college composed of students of free social habits. At their late suppers wines were used, and stakes were played for at their card tables. She had urged him to join the club, and had praised their "manly" ways; their freedom from boyish restraints. "They were men of the world; she never could care for any man who had not seen life."

He joined the club and this was the result. The silly, frivolous girl gave a sigh and then laughed nervously. It was a pity. She had lost an admirer.

But who was to blame? Not she. She knew other men of the world who would not be driven to suicide by a few glasses of liquor. She went on her foolish, cruel way.

This is a true story, stripped of its worst details. In every college town there are young girls whose influence, unfortunately, is stronger over the students than that of their wisest and dearest friends. How do they use it? *Youth's Companion.*

Is this Charge True? I have heard professional gamblers criticize the Church because of practices so nearly like their own. It is a sad thing if children of the light can not see moral distinction and identities so plainly as children of darkness. The test of the Pauline rule to do nothing which is likely to cause our brethren to stumble is especially applicable here. For the gambling passion is like dry tinder in human nature, and if dabbling in the practices described be but a spark, yet a spark may kindle a devouring flame. *Walter F. Prince.*

Beware.

Ah, let each of us beware
How his thoughts and motives bear!
Every road that we shall choose,
Other pilgrim feet will use.
Some will follow where we lead
Long as life shapes life, indeed.
Have a brother's care and pray
God to mark thy road each day. *James Buckham.*

II The Privilege of Strength

Support the Weak. Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves, says Paul in the first verse of the next chapter. Why should we judge our weak brother? Perhaps with our help he may become strong some day. It is the privilege of the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak, just as Great-heart in Pilgrim's Progress not only pursued his way with strength and steadiness, but as he went took the weak ones under his protection, fought their battles for them, helped them over the rough places, and brought them on the way to the journey's end.

In his earlier years Rudyard Kipling was wont to say, "There is no harm in liquor, taken moderately." Then one night he saw two young girls made drunk by two men in a concert hall, and he wrote this confession: "My own demand for beer helped to send those two girls reeling down the dark street. It is not good that we should let it lie before the eyes of children, and I have been a fool in writing to the contrary. Better it is that a man should go without his beer in public places than to bring temptation to the lips of young fools such as the four I had seen."

A Pledge signed for Another's Sake. The *Liverpool Daily Post* gives an interesting account of the signing of the pledge by Tawhiao, King of the New Zealand Maoris: "Tawhiao was anything but an abstainer, and his evil doings were a source of perpetual anxiety. Londoners will still remember his visit to England nearly twenty years ago, when he was, as far as a Maori monarch could be, one of the lions of the season. It was at the outset of his journey that he called upon Sir George Gray. Sir George Gray boldly raised the question which was troubling Tawhiao's friends. What, he asked Tawhiao, would he think of a man who brought about the death of a fellow-being, or of many fellow-beings, or who destroyed the happiness of a whole nation? "Who could be so cruel. It is not possible that anybody could be so wicked," said the King, and as he realized the meaning of the question he sobbed like a child, and asked Sir George pitifully what could be done lest he should disgrace the Maori people while in England. "I'll tell you," said Sir George. "We'll both sign a pledge, agreeing to abstain from alcohol in any form. That pledge will mutually bind us for a number of years, and there could be no more sacred contract."

An Argument for Total Abstinence. Why should an acknowledged temperate man become a total abstainer? Why should he be a pledged total ab-

stainer? Let it be clearly understood that in arguing for total abstinence, no attitude of universal condemnation of users of liquor is assumed. My own circle of acquaintance includes too many men of undoubted high character who use intoxicating liquor to some extent, to make it possible for me to take such an attitude of universal condemnation. Nor does the argument for total abstinence need to exaggerate the facts concerning intoxicating drinks. Let us freely admit all that can be said on the physiological side in the favor of the use of liquor. We are duly grateful for all the facts concerning the action of alcohol upon the pancreas; but we can not forget the vastly more important facts of its effects upon brain and character. The really rational man must give greatest significance to the greatest facts.

The first reason for total abstinence seems to me to lie in the real danger of even a moderate use of intoxicating liquor. The tendency of the use of alcoholic liquor is always unavoidably toward immoderation.

The second reason for total abstinence seems to me to lie in the appeal of physiological facts to the man who really wishes to be persistently at his best. Says Dr. Abel: "In all those avocations of life where keen senses, sharp attention, ready and immediate use of a clear judgment, or great concentration of the mind, are called for, alcohol in any form or amount is injurious when taken during performance of the duty in hand."

The third reason is its influence upon others. For myself, the mere fact that, at a moderate estimate, probably hundreds of men are annually carried, by the use of alcoholic liquor, into a condition in which they are of small or no value either to themselves or to society, seems to me to be a sufficient reason why I should throw the entire influence of my individual practice in favor of total abstinence. In no other way can one be certain that he is throwing the full weight of his influence against the evil of intemperance. The simple chance than my individual or family use of alcoholic liquors might be the occasion of starting another man in a custom that would mean absolute ruin to him, seems to me sufficient reason for total abstinence.

And in saying this, I do not forget that there are two classes of weaker brethren, and that you may stumble a man by making that a sin for him which is no sin, as well as by leading him into some course of action which his conscience condemns. But where the issues at stake are so great as they manifestly are in the use of intoxicating liquors, and where the gains of the use are so doubtful, I must believe that Paul's principle has real application: "If meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh forevermore, that I make not my brother to stumble."

Because, then, of the real danger to the user of alcoholic beverages, because of the appeal of the physiological facts to the man who really wishes to be persistently at his best, and because of the natural influence on others, I adopt for myself, and urge upon others, the policy of total abstinence.

A pledged total abstinence seems to me desirable because it is the most positive and definite way in which one's influence can be made effective for others. The man who has pledged himself to total abstinence has thereby put himself on record, as far as he possibly can, in favor of such a policy for all men. And the full weight of his influence in that direction can hardly be felt in any other way. Condensed from an Address by *President Henry Churchill King of Oberlin College.*

III Missionary Topic Stumbling Blocks

The Troubles of a South African King. Khama, the Christian king of the Bamangwatos, wrote to the British governor: "To fight against drink is to fight against demons, not against men. I dread the white man's drink more than all the *assagais* of the Matabeles, which kill men's bodies, and it is quickly over; but drink puts devils into men and destroys both bodies and souls for ever. Its wound never heals. I pray your honor never to ask me to open even a little door to drink."

In spite of all his precautions, Khama afterwards discovered that English traders were selling intoxicating liquors to his subjects. He called them to him, and addressed them in these words: When you white men rule in this county you can do as you like. At present I rule, and I shall maintain my laws

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which you insult and despise. You have insulted and despised me in my own town because I am a black man. You do so because you despise black men in your hearts.

"If you despise us, what do you want here in the country that God has given to us? Go back to your own country. Take everything you have; strip the iron roofs off the houses; the wood of the country, and the clay of which you made the bricks, you can leave to be thrown down. Take all that is yours and go. I am trying to lead my people to act according to that Word of God which we have received from you white people, and you show them an example of wickedness such as we have never known. You, the people of the Word of God! Go! Take your cattle, and leave my town, and never came back again."

The traders departed in disgrace, and since that time Khama's laws have been observed, and the white man's drink can not be found where he rules.

The Effect of Some Lives in Christian Lands. In the year 1888 it was confidently believed that Japan would be Christian by the end of the century. But there came a reaction brought about largely by the return of many Japanese who had gone abroad to study. They brought back reports of the religious and moral conditions of Christendom that astonished those who had supposed that "Christian lands" were Christian in deed, as well as in word. They told of the hideous forms of licentiousness rampant in New York, London, Paris, Berlin. It was often publicly stated that Christianity was a failure in our so-called "Christian nations" and others. "Why adopt so powerless a gospel for Japan." *Sidney Gulick,* in *The White Peril in the Far East.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

My right must not lead others wrong. *G. H. Knight.*

Breadth and tolerance are not indifferentism. *Henry Churchill King.*

Don't stumble over your halting brother; don't get in the way for him to stumble over you. *Bishop Fitzgerald.*

Sweep the snow from thine own door; spy not the frost on another's tiles. *Chinese Saying.*

The greatest fault, I should say, is to be conscious of none but other people's. *Carlyle.*

Judge not, that ye be not judged. Matt. 7.1.

Depart from evil and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it. Psa. 34.14.

None of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. Rom. 14.7.

Enjoying things which are pleasant, that is not the evil; it is the reducing of our mortal self to slavery to them that is. *Carlyle.*

The great beacon light God sets in all,
The conscience of each bosom. *Browning.*

My liberty ends when it begins to involve the possibility of wrong to my neighbor. *John Stewart Mill.*

Freedom means that the will should be governed by the conscience; and it means that the conscience should be governed by God. *Alexander Maclaren.*

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

Some one has truthfully said that no matter how stupid, or weak, or insignificant we are, each one of us has his circle about him, influenced by him, just as the least taper borne through a foggy night has its nimbus of red light to show where it goes. So, then, let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

To definitely and clearly define the important and the unimportant settles once for all many troublesome questions. "It is impossible to exaggerate the unimportance of things," said a woman of years and experience; if young people would early learn this truth they would be saved much regret in later years. The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

When Mutesa, the King of Uganda, was told by Stanley the commandment

of Christ, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, he had it written on a piece of board that he might read it over every day. Is this commandment written on your heart, and do you review it daily and govern your life by it? Then you will never be a stumbling block in the life of any one.

When you have a question to settle as to the right or wrong of any pleasure, ask yourself first, Is it wrong in itself; second, Can I enjoy it without harm to myself; third, Can I indulge myself in this pleasure without harm to others?

Is there a more solemn thought than the one Paul gives when he declares that each one of us shall give account of himself to God? What shall be my accounting?

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

Why judge or condemn one another? God alone is Judge, before Him, as it is written, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. Each one of us must give to God an account of himself, not of others. Let us not, therefore, decide that one man is right and another man wrong, but let us rather decide that we will not put a stumbling block in our brother's way. In my own mind I am certain, because of my knowledge gained through fellowship with Christ, that there is nothing in itself unclean, that is, nothing that it is unlawful to eat; but if any one thinks anything is unclean, then to him it is unclean, he must not eat it in violation of his own conscience. If your brother is hurt by your eating, you are not acting in the spirit of Christian love. Do not harm him for whom Christ died. Your liberty of conscience is a good thing, but you pay too dear a price for it when in exercising it you cause others to speak evil of it. The kingdom of God does not consist in eating and drinking; it consists in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, and he that serves God by promoting these things is well pleasing both to God and man. Therefore let our striving be for peace and for the spiritual upbuilding of one another. For the sake of eating what you think right to eat do not destroy your brother who is the workmanship of God. You may indeed lawfully eat all things, but it is evil for you, nevertheless, to eat what will give offence to another. It is good not to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything which causes a brother to stumble.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, Rom. 15.1. Nations which must bear "The White Man's Burden", and the nature of their burdens. Wm. J. Bryan in an address said that the Christian nations must give the rest of the world education, knowledge of the science of government, of arbitration as a substitute for war, an appreciation of the dignity of labor, and a high conception of life; and under the last particular he said that the orient needs a conception of life which recognizes individual responsibility to God, teaches the brotherhood of man and measures greatness by the service rendered.

2. Rom. 14.1. What scruples should not be made conditions of joining in Christian fellowship to-day?

3. John Stewart Mill's dictum that "one's liberty ends when it begins to involve the possibility of ruin to one's neighbor" carried out in political and business life.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Why should the Corinthians give money to the poor at Jerusalem according to Rom. 15.27? 2. According to the lesson text? 3. Where is the quotation in verse 15 found? (Ex. 16.18.) 4. To what does it refer? What is its application here? 5. In what spirit did Paul tell the Corinthians to make their collection, 2 Cor. 9.6-15? 6. What counsel did he give them in regard to systematic giving, 1 Cor. 16.2? 7. On what occasion did Jacob promise a tenth to God? (Gen. 28.22.) 8. Write the lesson in your own words. 9. By what parable did Jesus teach that giving to others is giving to God? (Matt. 25. 31-46.) 10 Bring to class several texts that teach the duty or the joy of giving.

LESSON X—DECEMBER 5

PAUL ON THE GRACE OF GIVING

Read Second Corinthians 8.1-15. Commit verse 9.

Golden Text

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20.35.

LESSON TEXT 2 Cor. 8.1-15

1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath
been given in the churches of Macedonia; 2 how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches
of their liberality. 3 For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, *they gave* of their own accord, 4 beseeching us with much
entreaty in regard of this grace and the fellowship in the ministering to the
saints: 5 and *this,* not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves
to the Lord, and to us through the will of God. 6 Insomuch that we exhorted
Titus, that as he had made a beginning before, so he would also complete in you
this grace also. 7 But as ye abound in everything, *in* faith, and utterance, and
knowledge, and *in* all earnestness, and *in* your love to us, *see* that ye abound in
this grace also. 8 I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through
the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love. 9 For ye know the
grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he
became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. 10 And herein
I give *my* judgment: for this is expedient for you, who were the first to make
a beginning a year ago, not only to do, but also to will. 11 But now complete
the doing also; that as *there was* the readiness to will, so *there may be* the
completion also out of your ability. 12 For if the readiness is there, *it is*
acceptable according as *a man* hath, not according as *he hath* not. 13 For *I say* not *this* that others may be eased *and* ye distressed: 41 but by equality:
your abundance *being a supply* at this present time for their want, that their
abundance also may become *a supply* for your want; that there may be equality:
15 as it is written, He that *gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *gathered* little had no lack.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Grace.* The expression of God's love. The success of the collection in Macedonia Paul does not ascribe to the churches, but to God whose grace, or love, moved them to generosity.

2. *In proof of affliction.* Affliction which tried them, put them to the proof. See 1 Thess. 2.14; 3.3-5.—*Abundance of their joy.* See 1 Thess. 1.6.—*Abounded unto.* Resulted in. Their poverty led to spiritual riches, great liberality.

3. *I bear witness.* Paul was writing this letter from Macedonia.

4. *Beseeching us with much entreaty.* Perhaps Paul had thought them too poor to join in this collection.—*In regard of this grace.* They considered it a grace or favor to be allowed to contribute.—*Saints.* "Men standing in special relation to God" (*Beet*).

5. *To us.* Their devotion to Paul as well as to the Lord led them to further his wish for the poor at Jerusalem.

6. *Before.* Possibly the visit referred to in 12.18.

7. *Ye abound in everything.* 1 Cor. 1.5.

8. *Proving.* Putting to proof by comparing them with the Macedonians.

9. This verse is parenthetical.—*Though he was rich.* Phil. 2.6, 7. *Rich*

seems to be used here metaphorically, referring to spiritual riches, and *poor* in its literal meaning, as the words are in 6.10 and in 8.2.

10. The *Twentieth Century Testament* gives this rendering: I am only making suggestions on this matter; for this is the best course for you, since you were a year before others, not only in taking action, but also in showing your readiness to do so.—*This* may mean completing of the collection, or it may mean this giving of a judgment or suggestion rather than a command.—*Not only to do but also to will.* These phrases depend on *the first.*

11. *Out of your ability.* According to your means.

12. *For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not.* "For the willingness that is manifest to all is pleasing to God if it is in accordance with their possessions. Paul does not ask that they do more than they are able" (*Weiss*).

13. *For I say not this that others may be eased and ye distressed.* He would not "rob Peter to pay Paul."

14. *But by equality.* I say this in accordance with the principle of equality. —*Their abundance also may become a supply for your want.* The situation may change, and sometime the Judean Christians may be helping the Corinthian Christians.

15. *It is written.* See Ex. 16.17, 18. Just as the collection of manna was equalized, so Paul would have the possessions in the Christian churches voluntarily equalized.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

3. *And beyond their power.*

> Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
> Of nicely-calculated less or more. *Wordsworth.*

9. *For your sakes he became poor.* This text, from bringing forward prominently the fact of our Lord's poverty as an example, gave rise to the Mendicant Orders, as founded by St. Francis of Assisi, who in this respect believed himself to be following the model of our Saviour's life. Such a result is doubly curious. It shows how a parenthesis, incidentally introduced, in an appeal, for a temporary purpose, to the generosity of the Corinthian Church, has given birth to an immense institution, at one time spread over the whole of Europe. It shows how much of the extravagances of that institution might have been checked by acting less on the letter, and more on the spirit, of the passage in which the text occurs; a passage of which the general tendency is the very opposite to that which could reduce the feelings of generosity to a definite and uniform system. *Dean Stanley,* in *Epistles of St. Paul.*

14. *Their want.* Several causes probably combined to impoverish the church of Jerusalem; the religious prejudices of the Jews, amongst whom they lived, entailed upon them constant social persecution, even in times of comparative peace: the claims of Christian visitors upon their hospitality were heavy; the maintenance of the apostles and of a disproportionate number of Christian teachers threw on them an undue share of Christian burdens. But whatever the causes of their poverty, it was certainly chronic, and not urgent. *F. Rendall* in *The Expositor.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *The riches of their liberality.* This is the testimony Aristides bore to the charity of the Christian in the time of Hadrian (117-138): He who has, gives to him who has not without grudging; and when they see the stranger they bring him to their dwelling, and rejoice over him as a true brother; for they do not call brothers those who are after the flesh, but those who are in the Spirit and in God; but when one of their poor passes away from the world, and any of them sees him, then he provides for his burial according to his ability, and if they hear that any of their number is imprisoned or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs, and if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver them. And if there is among them a man that is poor or needy, and they have not an abundance of necessaries, they fast

two or three days that they may provide the needy with their necessary food.

4. *Fellowship in the ministering to the saints.* As a rule, the Pharisee of to-day is well to do, made so by the tithes and gifts that are sent from Hebrews in strange lands to be distributed among the poor, a large portion of which remains in the pocket of the Rabbi and Pharisee. The Jews of the cities of Palestine are, as a rule, lazy and unthrifty, being taught to be so from their infancy; for every man, woman and child, from the day of his birth to his death receives a certain sum per week from a fund known as the Halooka, sent from all the Jews in the different parts of the world for the maintenance of their brethren in the Holy Land, for which they expect the residents of Canaan to pray for them, when near the Holy Places, and to be their proxy at their fast in the day of atonement and at their rejoicings on the day of the Passover. *Gamahliel Wad-El-Ward,* in *Palestine through the Eyes of a Native.*

Buddhist Monks in Burma Collecting Alms From "The Bible in the World"

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In our third lesson of this year about the beginnings of the Christian church at Jerusalem, we read that there was none among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need. Then "when the number of the disciples was multiplying" the work of caring for the poor took much of the apostles' time, and seven officers were appointed to see that no one lacked food.

When Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and met the apostles for a conference in regard to the basis on which Gentile converts should be received into the Church, the apostles impressed on Paul the churches' duty of caring for their poor; "they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do," Paul wrote the Galatians, 2.10.

The maintenance of its own poor had been the care of each particular church, but Paul would have the churches realize the principle of universal brotherhood, and he made a careful plan for a great collection from many distant churches for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem. To the Corinthians he gave as a motive for liberal giving the example of Christ and their abundance compared with the want at Jerusalem (verse 14), to the Romans (15.26, 27) he wrote that the churches of Macedonia and Achaia in making their gifts to the Church at Jerusalem but paid a debt of gratitude due that church. His greatest motive in having the collection made, however, seems to have been to prove the fellowship of all believers, to unite Gentiles and Jews, between whom there was danger of jealousy and dissensions, through the giving of common sympathy and sharing of mutual help. Therefore the collection must be made publicly and impressively. More than a year's time was occupied in gathering the gifts. Each group of churches sent their money by delegates who met Paul at different points and accompanied him to Jerusalem. We have seen how important in Paul's thought was the carrying out of his carefully made plans, how no threatening danger nor entreaty could keep him from going on to Jerusalem with the delegates, lesson XI of the third quarter.

To-day we have a passage from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, in which he urges them to complete their part of this great collection. For information in regard to this letter, see page 23 of this book.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. During the hot summer months there is a "Floating Hospital" that makes regular trips from Boston down the harbor with sick

babies and their poor mothers, and nurses and doctors go with them to help. One morning Beppo, an eight-year-old Italian lad, who had on ragged clothes and a brimless hat and carried a violin, asked permission to go with the boat and play. "I playa and taka collection," he said, and they allowed him to go. After he had played awhile he passed around his hat, but no one gave him a penny. He was angry and went to the manager to tell him how stingy the people all were, and the manager explained to him that these were all very poor people who had no money to give, whom kind people were sending on this excursion so that the air might do the poor sick babies good. Beppo looked at his own clothes without saying anything, but thinking that he, too, was poor. Then he went around the ship and looked at the babies and their mothers, and the angry look left him, he saw that they were really poorer than he, and that the babies and little children were feeble and sick. He sat down on a camp stool and played, and the children who could walk gathered round him. He played almost all that day, and when they returned he begged to be allowed to come next time, and play to the poor babies. The manager pinned the badge of the Floating Hospital on his ragged coat, and he went with every excursion that summer and played, nor would he take any money from the manager for his playing. He had found out that though he was poor he could do something for people who were poorer than he, and he was as happy as a king while playing to those babies.

There were poor people in the churches which Paul built up on his journeys in many lands, but there were people in the church at Jerusalem who were still poorer. Just as the manager of the Floating Hospital let Beppo see that he could do something for the poor, so Paul showed these churches what they could do for the poor at Jerusalem. The people at Corinth were slow in giving their money, and when he was writing them a letter he told them what the people had done in Macedonia who were themselves very poor.

For Older Pupils. When Dr. Thomas Brainerd was once trying to raise money in his church in Philadelphia for a good cause but was making little progress, he addressed his people in these words:

"Brethren, the Lord has denied to you the privilege of exercising many of the most precious graces of the Christian character, which, in His infinite mercy, He has vouchsafed to the rest of us. You never knew what it was to repose absolute, unassisted faith in God for the things of this world. You never had to go to sleep at night without knowing where your breakfast was to come from. You never had a sick child wasting away for the want of costly luxuries. You never had to deny yourself the gratification of the impulses of pity, when a sufferer came to your door. You never had to endure the humiliation of being dunned for an honest debt, without knowing whether you could ever pay it. All these unspeakable advantages in developing Christian character an inscrutable Providence has taken from you, and bestowed upon us poor men. The one solitary grace of the Christian life which has been denied to us and given to you, is the grace of liberality, and if you don't exercise that, the Lord have mercy on your souls!"

We have to-day Paul's words on the grace of liberality, and his thought and Dr. Brainerd's seem to have been similar.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Grace of Giving

The Duty of Giving. In all things I give you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, Paul said to the Ephesian elders who met him at Miletus as he was on his way to Jerusalem with the collection from the churches. Ye *ought* to help the weak, there is an obligation resting on you to help those in need. Your abundance at this present time is a supply for their want, he had written to the Corinthians. His thought was that of Jesus when He said to His disciples, after telling them that the master expects the servant to serve him, "even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do."

Money, talents, influence, whatever our wealth may be, is given us in trust.

It is often said, and yet it needs repeating, that we are only stewards of our possessions. We are accountable for the use we make of them.

The Best Givers. He who gives much is not always the best giver, but he who gives best always gives much. It is not the wealth of the gift, but the willingness of the giver that counts.

Henry Ward Beecher says: "Some men give so that you are angry every time you ask them to contribute. Other persons give with such beauty that you remember it as long as you live, and you say, "It is a pleasure to go to such men." There are some men who give as springs do; whether you go to them or not, they are always full, and your part is only to put your dish under the ever-flowing stream. Others give just as a pump does when the well is dry and the pump leaks."

A Debt to God. Andrew Fuller once asked an old friend for money for foreign missions. "I will give five pounds, Andrew, seeing it is you," his friend said as he gave him the money. "I will take nothing, seeing it is I," Fuller gravely announced as he handed back the money. "Andrew, you are right," then said his friend; "here are ten pounds, seeing it is for the Lord."

"All things are Thine: no gift have we,
Lord of all gifts! to offer Thee;
And hence with grateful hearts to-day,
Thy own before Thy feet we lay."

Systematic Giving. You must give systematically in order to know how little you give, it is said. You must give systematically, too, in order to give wisely. I suppose I ought to give something, you may say to yourself grudgingly when a cause is presented, and you may give grudgingly, not really knowing how much you can afford to give. Or you may give something to get rid of an importunity, or to escape being thought stingy, or merely because others are giving.

One should give because he wishes to give, not because he is expected to give. One should regulate his giving by principle, not by mood. One should give constantly and systematically, not casually or hap-hazardly, waiting for some special cause or claim to be brought to one's notice.

Mrs. Russell Sage is one of the world's wisest givers; her principle of giving should be those alike of the millionaire with his millions and the school girl with her pennies.

To consider what proportion of one's income one should give and then make it one's business to give that fixed amount is essential for the same reason that Dr. A. J. Gordon said to his congregation that definite pledges were necessary. "Human nature can not be trusted to carry out its generous impulses," he told them. "If I should succeed in winding any of you up to the determination to do generous things, you would run down again before next Sunday, unless your resolution were fastened by a ratchet. That is what a solemn pledge to pay money to God amounts to—a ratchet to hold us up to the pitch we have reached."

II The Blessing of Giving

Why Giving is more Blessed. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. These words of our Golden Text are Paul's words to the Ephesian elders that follow his statement, "Ye ought to help the weak." To give is not only a duty but a blessing. Giving is more blessed in the sense that it is more divine, more God-like, and also in the sense that it carries with it a greater blessing. Longfellow's words tell us how:

Our Lord and Master,
When He departed, left us in His will
As our best legacy on earth, the poor!
These we have always with us; had we not,
Our hearts would grow as hard as are these stones.

The giving tells upon the character. Generous giving not only keeps one from hardness of heart, but from selfishness, self-centeredness, with all the other evil traits to which that leads. To receive the good things of this world, to

receive help from others in time of need, is a great blessing; to use the good things of this world for others—whether money or talents or influence or sympathy—brings with it the keenest joy and is the more blessed. It ennobles character, and lays up for one treasures in heaven. Euripides voiced this truth—

> The thing thou art, and not the thing thou hast
> Abideth, yea, and bindeth to the last.

Self-Reward. In one of the reports of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society occur these words: Forty girls in Christian Oregon are educating and Christianizing one heathen girl in India; and one heathen girl in India is elevating, purifying, refining, and fitting for spheres of Christian usefulness forty girls in Oregon.

Some time ago the pastor of a Brooklyn church made an earnest appeal to his people for subscriptions for a new church building. Among his hearers was a school teacher who had to support others as well as herself, and who had never been interested in religious work. She went to him afterwards with a twenty dollar gold piece, which he hesitated to accept, because he knew it was more than she could well afford to give, but she told him that it was the first time she had ever given anything to a religious cause and the happiness the giving gave her was more than reward for the sacrifice. That gold piece was for her the beginning of a new life. She became a regular attendant at the church, her life was broadened and ennobled, and she was not only blessed herself but she became a blessing to others.

The Law for Nations as well as Individuals. Wealth, bestowed on families, has ruined so many boys as to give rise to the adage, "Where the father began, the son leaves off." More than half our rich men's sons would be better off had they been born poor. What is this but a demonstration that family selfishness is a violation of the law of the universe? The same law holds in regard to ecclesiastical and national selfishness. Can you point to any church or nation on earth which has morally or financially impoverished itself by helping the weak peoples of the earth? On the contrary, whenever a nation or a church becomes wealthy or yields to self-indulgence, its sudden destruction or slow decline is one of the most impressive lessons of human history. "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want." Jesus states the law for nations and churches as well as for individuals in its positive form: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." *J. W. Bashford,* in *God's Missionary Plan for the World.*

III Missionary Topic Prove the Sincerity of your Love

The Test. Paul told the Corinthians that their attitude toward this collection for the poor tested the genuineness of their love. Had they failed to complete what they had approved of doing, he would have judged wholly insincere their protestations of affection for Christ and for himself, and for their fellowmen. A missionary worker recently said that "The man who prays 'Thy Kingdom come,' and does not give some just proportion of his income to promote the Kingdom, is a conscious or an unconscious hypocrite."

The small lad whose struggle with his conscience is thus recorded in an editorial in the *Sunday-School Times* had a clear conception of what sincerity meant:—

A small boy came into his father's room one morning with his purse in his hand, counting his money. "What are you going to do with all that money?" asked his father.

"I am going to spend it at the fair," he replied.

"I think, if I were you," the father said, "I would put some of that money in my missionary bank before going to the fair. You will have a much happier day." The little boy had two banks, one his own and the other his missionary bank, between which he was accustomed to divide his money.

"Oh, no," he said with emphasis, "I need all this money to spend at the fair."

"Very well," observed the father, "but let us kneel down and say our prayers before we do down to breakfast." So they knelt down. The little boy was accustomed to say in his prayers, "And bless the missionaries and the little children on the other side of the world." The father noticed that this petition was omitted, and he called his son's attention to the fact. The little fellow resented the intrusion, and answered indignantly, "Now, look here, father, who is saying this prayer?"

"Well, it is your prayer," the father answered, "but I think you ought not to leave out the missionaries and the children on the other side of the world."

"But, father," said the boy, "I need all that money."

"I didn't say anything about the money," his father said, "but I think you ought not to leave the missionaries out of your prayer."

So the little boy thought a moment and had a short struggle, and then prayed as he was wont to pray. When he had finished, he remarked quietly, "I guess I had better put some of that money in my missionary bank." The honesty of his heart told him he must set about accomplishing his prayer. How could he refrain from doing what he could to bless those whom he was asking God to bless?

What might be done. Max Müller said that if it were considered "not respectable" to give less than one-tenth of one's income, the amount in England alone would be one hundred and eighty millions a year. It is estimated that there are nine billions of dollars in the hands of professed Christians in the United States. What might they not accomplish for mission work if they proved the sincerity of their belief? If each of the thirteen million Sunday-school scholars of the United States gave one cent a week for missions it would amount to nearly seven million dollars a year.

One way of Proving the Sincerity of One's Love. To the Psi Upsilon Fraternity Mr. Joseph Hardy, of Boston, gave this glimpse of the ambitions which had controlled his life:

"I am not a college man, and it was the bitter disappointment of my life that I could not be one. I wanted to go to college and be a minister; I went to Phillips' Academy to prepare, but my health broke down, and in spite of my determined hope to be able to go on, at last the truth was forced upon me that I could not.

To tell my disappointment is impossible. It seemed as if all my hope and purpose in life were defeated. 'I can not be God's minister,' was the sentence that kept rolling through my mind. When that fact at last became certain to me, one morning, alone in my room, my distress was so great that I threw myself flat on the floor. The voiceless cry of my soul was, 'O God, I cannot be Thy minister!' Then there came to me as I lay there a vision, a new hope, a perception that I could serve God in business with the same devotion as in preaching, and that to make money for God might be my sacred calling. The vision of this service, and its nature as a sacred ministry, was so clear and joyous that I rose to my feet, and with new hope in my heart, exclaimed aloud: 'O God I can be Thy minister. I will go back to Boston. I will make money for God, and that shall be my ministry.' From that time I have felt myself as much appointed and ordained to make money for God as if I had been permitted to carry out my own plan and been ordained to preach the gospel. I am God's man, and the ministry to which God has called me is to make and administer money for Him, and I consider myself responsible to discharge this ministry and to give account of it to Him."

SENTENCE SERMONS

Genuine benevolence is invincible. *Marcus Aurelius.*

Hands that ope but to receive
Empty close; they only live
Richly who can richly give. *Whittier.*

Where there is little love for giving, there is little likeness to God. *C. E. Hallam.*

A man there was—the people called him mad—
The more he gave away, the more he had. *Bunyan.*

True conversion most frequently consists of four stages: first, the head;

second, the heart; third, the mouth; and fourth, the pocket; but from the third to the fourth there is a long passage, with cataracts to impede progress worse than those in the Nile. *Rabbi Duncan.*

The Church can never capture the world for Christ so long as our gifts rest upon spasmodic emotion rather than upon conscience. *J. W. Bashford.*

He that giveth, let him do it with liberality. Rom. 12.8.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

See that you abound in this grace also. According to your power give of your own accord. Give your own selves to the Lord. Prove the sincerity of your love. Remember that for your sakes Christ became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. Let the readiness to will be followed by the completion of the doing. Your abundance should be a supply for others' want.

We shall do so much in the years to come,
But what have we done to-day?
We shall give our gold in a princely sum,
But what did we give to-day? *Nixon Waterman.*

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

I call to your remembrance the example of the Macedonians, who were moved to their generosity by the grace of God. Though they were tried by troubles, yet their overflowing joy and even their great poverty led them to spiritual riches, to a great liberality. I myself bare witness that according to their ability, and even beyond their ability, they gave willingly, entreating me for the favor of sharing in the ministry to the Christian poor. This they did, not only as I had expected, but first they gave themselves in loyal devotion to the Lord and to me. Their liberality led me to urge Titus, who began the collection among you, to complete his work. You are rich in faith and speech and knowledge and earnestness; show yourselves rich in this grace also. I do not command you to make this collection, but by holding up to you the earnestness of others I test the genuineness of your love. You know the loving-kindness of your Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich in heavenly glory, became poor for your sakes, that you through His poverty might become spiritually rich. In these words I am only giving my opinion, deeming it best for you, who earlier than the Macedonians expressed your willingness to give and began your collection. But now I urge you to complete it, that your willing readiness and your accomplishment may correspond according to your means, for the readiness to give as one is able, not more than one is able, is acceptable to God. It is not my object to bring relief to others by embarrassing you; but that in accordance with the principle of equality your abundance now may supply the need of others, and, when circumstances are changed, their abundance may supply your need; even as there was equality in the time when the Israelites were fed by manna from heaven, when he who gathered much had none left over, and he who gathered little did not lack.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Diminish charity by increasing justice. *Jane Addams.*
2. Every property owner a trustee. See "Christianity and Social Problems," by Dr. Lyman Abbott.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Read the entire Second Epistle to Timothy. 2. Where was it written? 3. For what purpose? 4. What is said about Timothy in the Acts and in Paul's letters? (See Subject-Index of Bible.) 5. With verse 6 compare 1 Tim. 1.18; 6.12; 1 Cor. 9.24-26; Phil. 1.30. 6. What were some of the things Paul had endured while fighting the good fight? (Lesson VIII.) 7. To whom did Paul speak about his desire to finish his course? (Lesson X.) 8. Paul's words in verse 16 recall what words of Stephen? (Acts 7.60.)

LESSON XI—DECEMBER 12

PAUL'S LAST WORDS

Read Second Timothy 4.1-18. Commit verses 6-8.

Golden Text

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1.21.

LESSON TEXT II Tim. 4.1-8, 16-18

1 I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. 5 But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. 6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: 8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

16 At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. 17 But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Thee.* Timothy.—*Who shall judge the living and the dead.* God the Judge of all, Heb. 12.23; Acts 10.42.—*By his appearing and his kingdom.* The phrase depends on the verb *charge.* See verse 8.

2. These clauses are all objects of the verb *charge,* verse 1.—*The word.* The message about Christ.

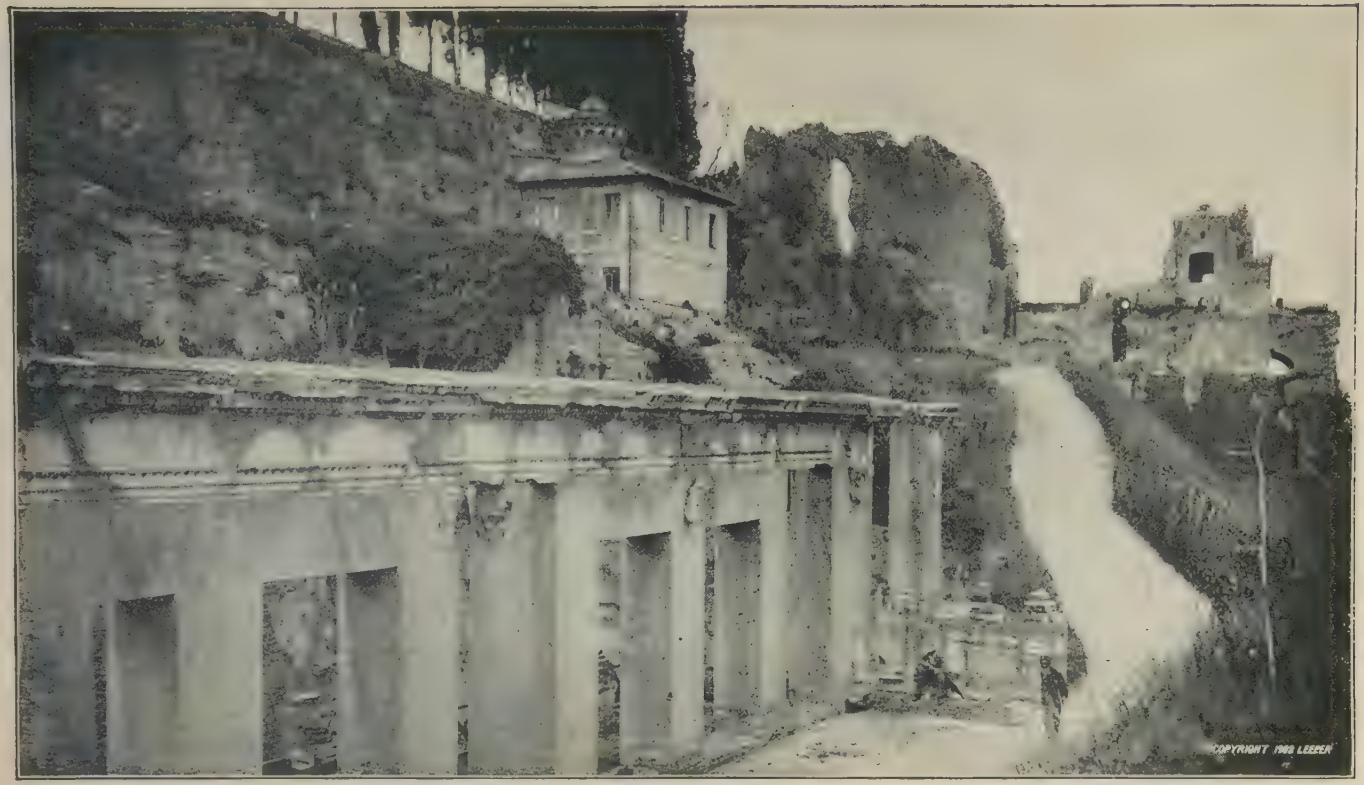
3. *The time will come.* See 3.1.—*The sound doctrine.* R. V. M., *healthful teaching.*—*Having itching ears.* Like the Athenians, they desired either to tell or to hear some new thing, Acts 17.21.—*Lusts.* Desires.

5. *Suffer hardship.* See 2.3.

6. *Being offered.* Paul refers to his approaching martyrdom.—*Departure.* From the world. See Phil. 1.23; 2.17.

7. *I have fought a good fight.* See 1 Tim. 6.12. War the good warfare, 1 Tim. 1.18. The words here, however, would be more closely rendered, as the Rev. J. D. Jones has suggested, by "contested earnestly in the good contest," for it is the athlete that the apostle has in mind in this verse.—*I have finished the course.* Like a runner in the games. See 1 Cor. 9.24; Acts 20.24.—*I have kept the faith.* As contestants keep the rules of the games, so Paul had kept the rules of life's course, he had trusted in God.—*The crown.* See 1 Cor. 9.25.—*That day.* The day of judgment.—*The Lord, the righteous judge.* Perhaps Paul is thinking of Nero, the unrighteous judge.

16. *My first defence.* "It is a plausible conjecture of Conybeare and Howson, that the first hearing, on which he was acquitted and 'delivered out of the



"ST. PAUL'S PRISON," ROME

The chambers shown in this illustration belonged to the barracks of that cohort of the Pretorian Guard which was in immediate attendance upon the Emperor and the imperial palace. The path shown in the picture leads up to the side of the Palatine, on the top of which stood the palaces of the Cæsars. Here it is believed by many Paul was, at least, temporarily confined until he had arranged for his own hired house.

lion's mouth' (verse 17), was on the charge of complicity and sympathy with the incendaries who had burned Rome in 64; and that charge was triumphantly disproved. The second and fatal charge, heard later, was doubtless that of treason, shown by hostility to the established customs of society and by weakening the Imperial authority" (*Ramsay*).

17. *But the Lord stood by me.* See John 16.32.—*Delivered out of the mouth of the lion.* A quotation from Psa. 22.21.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

4. *They will turn aside unto fables.* This was the harvest reaped in the large communities over which the Church of Rome came to exercise dominion. When the Scriptures were neglected in the worship and preaching of the Church, the people read instead fabulous stories of the life and exploits of the saints. The number of these miraculous legends grew with the desire for them, till the great historic facts of Christianity were thrust into the background. *J. P. Lilley, the Pastoral Epistles.*

5. *Fulfil thy ministry.* In his application to the London Missionary Society Livingstone stated his ideas of missionary work, and they agree well with Paul's: "The missionary's object is to endeavor by every means within his power to make known the gospel by preaching, exhortation, conversation, instruction of the young; improving, as far as in his power, the temporal condition of those among whom he labors, by introducing the arts and sciences of civilization, and doing everything to commend Christianity to their hearts and consciences."

5, 6. *Fulfil thy ministry, for I am already being offered.*

> God be thanked that the dead have left still
> Good undone for the living to do—
> Still some aim for the heart and the will
> And the soul of a man to pursue, *Owen Meredith.*

6. *The time of my departure is come.* It was a noble end, certainly. Men lose their hope and trust as they grow old. Here was a man who kept them all fresh to the last. Men cease to have strong convictions and grow cynical or careless. Here was a man who believed more and not less as he knew more of God, and of himself, and of the world. We are sure that his was the old age God loves to see; that the careless and the hopeless and the faithless are failures. To such men as Paul alone is God's promise to David fulfilled: With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation. *Phillips Brooks,* in *Keeping the Faith.*

7. The whole of Paul's theology is summed up in this last parting word to his friends in Jesus Christ. Life is a battle—fight it bravely; life is a course—run it eagerly; life is a faith-keeping—hold it firmly; but do not think to win the righteousness by your battle, by your race, or by your faith-keeping: God will give it to you: it is His free gift, if you simply love Him and wish to see Him. *Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life and Letters of Paul.*

7. *I have fought the good fight.*

> Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
> The better fight, who single hast maintained
> Gainst revolted multitudes the cause
> Of Truth—in word mightier than they in arms, *Milton.*

7. *I have finished the course.*

> To start thee on thy outrunning race,
> Christ shows the splendor of His Face:
> What will that Face of splendor be
> When at the goal He welcomes thee? *Christina Rossetti.*

8. *Henceforth.* The best is yet to be, the last of life, for which the first was made. *Browning.*

18. *The Lord will save me urto his heavenly kingdom.* One who has never seen a ship could know nothing of the "Oceanic" as she lay, a great hulk, along the dock at Liverpool. But when the last passenger and the last letter was on

board, and the word rang from the bridge, "Loose the shore rope" and the vessel began to move away, and when she reached the sea, then could we see for what the "Oceanic" was made. She was not made to hug the shore; she was made for the mighty deep. There must be a loosing before she could be in her element. Paul knew that presently beyond the land of shadow and darkness that men call death, after he had been loosed from his moorings and reached the great eternal sea of life, he would realize that for which he had been created. *G. C. Morgan,* in *Northfield Echos.*

Behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own. *James Russell Lowell.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

6. *I am already being offered.* The margin of the Revised Version gives this literal rendering of the Greek, *I am already poured out as a drink-offering.* When the meal-offering was presented on the altar, there was also a drink-offering of wine "poured out unto Jehovah" (Num. 28.7). Paul's whole life had been a sacrifice offered to God, and now his martyrdom is so near that he speaks of the shedding of his blood as a drink-offering already being offered.

7, 8. *I have finished the course. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.* The Greek youth who won the prize in the race at the Olympian games entered his native city on his return through a breach made for him in its walls, which was then closed that no one less worthy should tread in his footsteps. His statue might be erected in the sacred grove of Olympia and poets might sing his praises, but the prize for which he contended, his dearest possession, was a crown of olive branches. Paul evidently had the Grecian games in mind when he wrote these words.

A representation on the bottom of a glass cup found in the Roman Catacombs, of Christ presenting a crown to Paul and Peter

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Paul was imprisoned at Rome when he wrote his earnest appeal to Timothy on whom his mantle should fall. See the Historical Background of Lesson VII, page 399. Timothy was the best loved of all Paul's younger friends. In his letters to him he calls him "My true child in faith," "My dearly beloved son." Timothy's mother was a Jewess and his father a Greek. They lived either in Lystra or Derbe. By his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, Timothy had been taught the sacred writings as a child, and when Paul came to his city and preached faith in Christ, Timothy was among the converts. He accompanied Paul on various journeys, and we meet him at Ephesus, Philippi, Berea, Corinth and Rome. "He worketh the work of the Lord as I also do," Paul wrote the Corinthians, and to the Philippians he wrote, "I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state. As a son with the father, he hath served me in the gospel. Timothy was at Ephesus when Paul wrote his letters to him. In his second letter Paul says: "I thank God how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications. night and day longing to see thee, that I may be filled with joy."

See the Second Epistle to Timothy, page 25 of this book.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In the Yukon Valley in Alaska an Indian missionary lay dying of starvation. He must go and leave his work unfinished, some one must take his place and carry it on, but who would do it? There was only an Indian lad with him, and he had not known nor cared much about the missionary's work. "Amos," he said, "I am about to leave you, but I want to

give you this book, God's Word, and I want you to read it. I want you to teach it to my people." After Amos had buried his friend, he sat down alone to read the book he had left him. He went back to the missionary settlement and asked to be taught, and now he is carrying on the older missionary's work.

Jesus Christ had only a few short years in which to work here on earth. When He departed He bade His disciples continue what He had begun to do. We have seen this year how Peter and then the great apostle Paul carried out His work. Now Paul knows that his life is about to be sacrificed for the Master he has served so well, and he rejoices that he has a young friend named Timothy who will continue his work. He writes to Timothy, and tells him what his work must be and how he must do it.

For Older Pupils. When Cæsar Augustus, the great Roman Emperor, was dying, he called for a mirror, and after gazing at himself and smoothing his hair he said to those about him: "Have I played my part well? If so, applaud me."

What a contrast between the last thoughts that filled his mind and the last thoughts of Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, when the time of his departure was come!

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Life's Race well run

The Picture in Paul's Mind. I wish I could put before you Symonds' graphic picture of the Olympian Games. The time has come—the Spring time—for the races. From all over Greece men are gathering to this great occasion. Merchants and peddlers are coming with their wares; princes with their retinues; women in their pomp and circumstances. Poets are coming with their poems; historians to read their histories, and dramatists to read their dramas (for there are no printed books); and politicians to ply their trade as well. All Greece is gathering at the Olympian Games. The hour has come. Men are ranged alongside one another. The signal is given; they start and run their eager race; and when it is over, the crown is given to one. And the greatest poet of Greece counts himself not unworthy to sing the praise of a man who wins the race in the Olympian Games.—Something such as this is the picture which is before Paul, when he says, "I have finished the course." He has been running a race. He tells us in Philippians what this race is. "Forgetting those things which are behind, reaching forward to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus." *Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life that really is.*

How he ran his Race. "Paul was a queer person," said Huxley. To this practical man of science Paul's words, "To me to live is Christ" may have seemed visionary, yet in these words Paul but expressed his thought that Christ's will was his will. From the moment that God revealed His Son in him, he could truly say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me," and he kept the faith throughout his life. His very weakness, his thorn in the flesh, was but Christ's opportunity, for His power is made perfect in weakness. Christ filled his horizon. His one purpose was to run his race as Christ would have him run, and therefore he ran it well.

Clinton Scollard might have had Paul in mind as he wrote the second stanza below:

He who to run life's race doth dare
With wrong at heart, though fleet he flees,
He may not win although he wear
The sandals of Hippomenes.

But he who keeps a stainless soul,
Albeit by pain and trial shod,
Will reach at last the priceless goal
That stands before the throne of God.

The Lesson from Hebrews. In the first and second verses of the twelfth chapter of Hebrews we have a picture of the Christian life as a race. There is a great company who have already run this race well, whose lives should be

an inspiration to our lives; "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" make the right preparation for our running, "laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us," and let us run the race aright, "run with patience the race that is set before us," following in the footsteps of our great Leader, "looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." This race that is set before us is of no famous earthly career, but the race of faith. The Perfecter of our faith, "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of God."

The Militant Life. It is not so much the soldier as the athlete the apostle has in mind; not so much the "stricken field" as the gymnasium and the race-course. "Contend earnestly in the good contest." But whether we think of the soldier or the athlete, the primary truth taught remains one and the same. And that is this: there is no life of faith, no life of holiness and service possible without effort and struggle. Genuine goodness is never soft; it is always forceful, energetic, militant. "So fight I," says the apostle—and here apparently he takes his illustration from the boxing ring, "as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and bring it into subjection." "So run I," he says again, "as not uncertainly," and here the figure is changed to that of the runner pressing with panting breath and every muscle strained to the goal. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day," he says in yet another place, and here the figure is changed again to that of the soldier issuing forth to face the dust and heat of battle. "Exercise thyself," says the Apostle, or, if I may transliterate the Greek and coin a word in the process, "Gymnastize thyself into godliness," as if to say, "Godliness is no easy thing; you have to train and to strip for it."

Genuine goodness is positive, energetic, athletic, and to be genuinely good a man must put on strength and courage. There is a significant word in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. He is giving a list of the people who cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. It is a terrible list, and midway through it he mentions the "effeminate." And who are the "effeminate"? They are the "soft." (The word is exactly the same word as that used in the phrase "soft raiment"). The "soft," the weak, the flabby, the limp shall not inherit the kingdom, says St. Paul. No! because the kingdom only belongs to the good, and goodness is never "soft"; goodness, of necessity, is energetic, athletic, militant. The good man to be a good man must have granite in him. Condensed from an address by the *Rev. J. D. Jones.*

The Flying Start. Our life during the rest of the month is largely going to determine the kind of year we shall make of the next one. In running races two kinds of starts are used: the start from a stand-still, and what is called the flying start. In the latter, the contestants come up to the actual starting-mark on the run. New Year's day is to be our mark for the starting of another year's race, and, whether we will or not, all who enter that race will come up to it with a "flying start." With some, the word "flying" will seem a misnomer, for their start will be faltering and wabbly. Is it not worth while to gain all the advantage and momentum that we can, just now, for the hard race that lies just ahead? Editorial in *Sunday-School Times.*

II Life's Work well done

An Untroubled Memory. "There's ae man I envy every day. No the man who is rich and powerful,—na, na! It is the man whose life is clean and white frae his boyhood until this hour, who can turn over the pages and let every man look on," says one of Ian MacLaren's characters.

Such a man was Paul. While still a young man Robert Burns could only say,

"I backward cast mine e'e
On prospects drear,"

but Paul in his old age could review life and know that there was nothing to be concealed, that his work for Christ had been well done.

Dr. van Dyke has a little poem entitled "The child in the Garden." It is "the garden of untroubled thought" which the poet wishes again to visit;

the door is open, shall he enter? Just within the gate he sees a child who holds out his hands to him and then,

"Come in" he says, "and play awhile with me;
I am the little child you used to be."

We can never escape from our past. There will always be for us the child or the youth or the man we used to be. The faculty we have of holding the past in the store-house of our mind and then reproducing it at will, and more often without will—is strange and wonderful. We may think we have forgotten, but unexpectedly "the child we used to be" will stand before us. Shall we be as unashamed of him as was Paul?

A Satisfied Memory. Paul had not been successful as the world counts success. He had suffered the loss of all things, had been through trials and persecutions manifold, had been worried and tormented by his own people, had been hunted and despised and beaten and imprisoned by his enemies, and now the headsman's ax awaits him. But he did not claim that he had won a great victory, only that he had fought a good fight. He has finished his course.

The mightiest missionary of the cross, the greatest theologian of the Church, had done his work well, and he had the satisfaction that Stanley on his return from one of his African expeditions thus expressed: "No honor or reward, however great, can be equal to that subtle satisfaction that a man feels when he can point to his own work and say, 'See, now, the task I promised you to perform with all loyalty and honesty, with might and main, to the uttermost of my ability, and God willing, is to-day finished. Say, is it well and truly done?' and when the employer shall confess that 'It is well and truly done,' can there be any recompense higher than that to one's inward self?"

The Life that bears Looking back upon. Let us learn, too, that the only life that bears being looked back upon is a life of Christian devotion and effort. It shows fairer when seen in the strange cross lights that come when we stand on the boundary of two worlds, with the white radiance of eternity beginning to master the vulgar oil lamps of earth, than when seen by these alone. All others have their shabbiness and their selfishness disclosed then. I remember once seeing a mob of revellers streaming out from a masked ball in a London theatre in the early morning sunlight; draggled and heavy-eyed, the rouge showing on the cheeks, and the shabby tawdriness of the foolish costumes, pitilessly revealed by the pure light. So will many a life look when the day dawns, and the wild riot ends in its unwelcome beams. The one question for us all, will be, Have I lived for Christ and by Him? Let it be the one question for us now, and let it be answered, Yes. Then we shall have at the last a calm confidence, equally far removed from presumption and from dread, which will let us look back on life, though it be full of failures and sins, with peace, and forward with humble hope of the reward which we shall receive from His mercy. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *The Secret of Power.*

The Great Review. The day that Moltke, the great German field-marshall, was eighty years old he wrote in a letter to a friend: "I stand near the end of my life's course. And what a wholly different measuring-rod will be used upon our earthly careers in the future world from that used in this! The value of a human life will be determined, not by the glory of success, but by the purity of motive and the faithful perseverance in one's duty, even where the events have seemed of little consequence. What a wonderful re-arrangement of the high and the low will take place at the great review!"

We can not say to ourselves that we shall live to be eighty years old, and in that time we shall have accomplished what we purpose accomplishing. It may be at eighty that we give back our lives to God, but it may be next year, next week, that God will call us home. The thought of the summons that will surely come to us should not gloom but gladden our lives.

"Glad did I live, and glad did I die,
And I lay me down with a will,"

wrote Robert Louis Stevenson as he awaited his summons in Samoa after a short life which had been so nobly lived that he could say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

What we should say to ourselves is this: With God's help I will endeavor so to live from day to day that I shall glorify Him on earth, so that whenever He who has the keys of life and death shall bid me come to Him, I shall have finished the work that He gave me to do.

III Life's Crown well won

To die is Gain. It is a beautiful picture his letter gives us of this great hero quietly awaiting his end, nobly conscious that his life had been well lived, his work well done, and calmly certain that he shall soon be with Christ which is far better.

In the great drama Cardinal Richelieu is asked, "Art thou Richelieu?" and he replies, "Yesterday I was Richelieu, to-day I am a poor old man; to-morrow I know not what." In the great history Paul might have been asked, "Art thou Paul?" and he might have replied, "Yesterday I was Paul the active worker, to-day I am Paul the aged man awaiting his summons, to-morrow I shall have won my crown."

To-morrow came. Paul was led by Roman soldiers out through the Ostian gate to the place of his execution. On the way, so tradition says, he saw Plautilla, the daughter of Flavius Sabinus, weeping bitterly, and to her he said, "Plautilla, weep not, and give me a veil, wherewith to blind my eyes, for I am going to see my Lord." She gave him the veil, and the procession moved on. They halted. The sword was uplifted and fell. Paul saw his Lord. For him to live was Christ—to die was gain.

The All-Important Question. Ah, friends, the all important question for each of us is, How may we have such a hope like a great sunset light shining into the western windows of our souls? There is but one answer—Trust Christ. That is enough. Nothing else is. Is your life built on Jesus Christ? Are you trusting your salvation to Him? Are you giving Him your love and service? Does your life bear looking at to-day? Will it bear looking at in death? Will it bear His looking at in judgment?

If you can humbly say, To me to live is Christ, then is it well. Living by Him, we may be ready quietly to lie down when the time comes, and may have all the future filled with the blaze of a great hope that glows brighter as the darkness thickens. *Alexander Maclaren,* in *The Secret of Power.*

We Reap as we have Sown.

We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our future's atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.
The tissues of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown. *Whittier.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

The best of prophets of the future is the past. *Byron.*

Let him not boast who puts his armor on
As he who puts it off, the battle done. *Longfellow.*

There are no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below. *Spurgeon.*

Enjoy the present hour, be thankful for the past,
And neither fear nor wish th' approaches of the last. *Cowley.*

There is no gate into heaven except at the end of the path of duty, there is not even an honored and peaceful grave for us until we can say with the Master, "I have glorified Thee on earth, I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do." *Henry van Dyke.*

A word in due season, how good it is! Prov. 15.23.

Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things

which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phil. 3.13, 14.

Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal. 1 Tim. 6.12.

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

What Paul exhorted Timothy to be and to do he had himself been and done. Our example must agree with our counsel.

The young man Timothy must take up the work of the aged Paul. Do you know people who are not ready for the work and responsibility that should be theirs?

Said Russell Sage, the multi-millionaire, near the close of his long life, "I think if I had my life to live over again it would be as honest, as simple, as home-loving as I could make it." Lives can not be lived over again. It is your privilege to be young; you can decide now what your life shall be.

The year 1909 is almost over. Can you look back and say that you have run its race well? You, too, may be heroes in the strife like Paul; strive so to live that as you look back each year or month or week or day, you can say truthfully, I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith.

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

I charge you in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom, solemnly wrote Paul to his young friend Timothy, proclaim the message about Christ, be ready at all times, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with patience and instructiveness. The time is coming when the people will not give heed to sound doctrine, but in their curiosity will seek teachers after their own desires, turning themselves away from the truths unto fables. But do you, Timothy, be sober-minded in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge the duties of your ministry, for you must take my place, as I am about to leave you, my martyrdom is near at hand. Then with great joy the apostle exclaimed, as he reviewed his own life, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith, I have won the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge has in keeping for me on that day, for me and for all who have loved him.

An appeal to Timothy to come to him with Mark, and a sad story of the scattering of friends follow in the letter. Though all forsook me at my first defence—may it not be charged against them—he writes, the Lord was with me and strengthened me, in order that the message might be fully proclaimed by me and all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered from "the lion's mouth." The Lord will deliver me from all evil, and will save me for his heavenly kingdom, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The work that Jesus began both to do and to teach we have seen wondrously carried on by His great apostle Paul, and now we leave him in his old age, not creeping into port, a wreck with broken masts and rudder gone, as Bishop Brooks beautifully expresses the thought, but full sail still, and strong for other voyages in other seas.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The satisfaction of a well-spent life.
2. The ideal minister. See article by Dr. C. C. Hall in the *Atlantic*, November, 1907.
3. Those who to-day will not "endure sound doctrine," but "heap to themselves teachers" of Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritualism, etc.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Bring to class your scrapbook, or your notebook containing your Life of Paul.

Re-read Acts 21-28 and the lessons from the epistles studied this quarter.

(Varied suggestions are given for next Sunday's review. A review of the entire year's work is most desirable.)

REVIEW

Golden Text for the Quarter

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. II Tim. 4.7.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LAST EIGHT CHAPTERS OF THE ACTS AND OF FOUR LESSONS FROM PAUL'S EPISTLES

See directions page 122.

Lesson I. To prove to the Jews of Jerusalem that he observed the Jewish customs, Paul consented to undergo the rite of purification with four others. The seven days were almost over when Jews from Asia saw him in the temple and created a great commotion among the people by shouting out that here was a man who had spoken everywhere against them and their laws; and they charged him also with having brought Greeks into the sacred place,—for they had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they assumed that he had brought him into the temple. The people siezed Paul, dragged him out of the temple, and would have killed him had not the news of the uproar been brought to the chief captain in command of the garrison. With soldiers and centurions he charged down upon the crowd, rescued Paul, and had him bound with chains and taken toward the stairs leading to the fort. The crowd pressed upon him so that he was borne off his feet. Surprised at Paul's speaking to him in Greek, the chief captain asked if he were not an Egyptian who had raised an insurrection, and Paul proudly told him that he was a Jew of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city, and asked permission to speak to the people.

Permission to speak was granted Paul, and standing on the stairs he addressed the crowd in Hebrew. He told them of his birth as a Jew, his persecution of the Christians, his conversion, his loss and return of sight, his coming to Jerusalem where in a trance he was told that he must go to the Gentiles. "Kill him," the people shouted as the word "Gentiles" was mentioned, and so great was the tumult that the officer hurried Paul into the fort. There he was ordered to be scourged, but this was not carried out because Paul announced that he was a Roman citizen.

The next day the chief captain brought Paul before the Sanhedrin that he might learn of what he was accused. The high priest ordered the men standing near to strike Paul on the mouth as he began his speech, and Paul's angry retort called forth a rebuke from the people, whereupon Paul said he had not known that it was the High Priest, for Scripture forbade evil speaking against rulers. Then Paul announced that he was a Pharisee and it was the question of the resurrection that had been raised against him. A quarrel between the Pharisees and Sadducees then followed, and again fearing for the life of his prisoner, the chief captain had him taken back into the fort.

Lesson II. That night the Lord stood by Paul and bade him be of good cheer, telling him that as he had witnessed for him at Jerusalem, so he should at Rome. In the morning forty Jews bound themselves by an oath not to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. They went to the members of the Sanhedrin and asked them to send for Paul on the pretext that they would examine him again, purposing themselves to kill him on the way. Paul's nephew heard of the plot and reported it to Paul. Paul had the young man brought before the chief captain, and when the latter had heard his story he at once gave orders to two centurions to start for Cæsarea with Paul at nine o'clock that night. They were directed to take a large guard with them—two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen—and to deliver him safely to Felix.

With the company the chief captain sent a letter to Felix, explaining what had happened, and stating that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment, but was sent to Felix to escape the plot of the Jews against his life; Paul's accusers, the captain added, had been ordered to appear before Felix. The captain's orders were carried out, and Paul was brought in safety to Felix, who had him kept under guard in Herod's palace till his accusers arrived.

Five days later members of the Sanhedrin, with a lawyer named Tertullus appeared against Paul. At the hearing Tertullus made the first speech. After words of flattery to the Governor, he charged Paul with being a mover of insurrections among the Jews throughout the world, a ringleader of the Sect of the Nazarenes, and a profaner of the temple.

Lesson III. Paul then made his defense. Because of the Governor's knowledge of his nation, he spoke with more confidence, he said, for Felix would know that the first charge was false, as it was now only twelve days since he first went to Jerusalem to worship, and neither in the temple nor in the city had he collected a crowd. That he served the God of his fathers after the Way which they called a sect, he acknowledged, but he believed the Law and the Prophets, and he had the same hope as they that there should be a resurrection of the just and unjust. He strove at all times to have a clear conscience toward God and men. After an absence of some years he had come to bring gifts to his nation; the Jews had found him in the temple engaged in a Jewish rite, without a crowd. There were Jews from Asia—who ought to appear there against him, if they had anything with which to charge him. Those who had come could repeat against him only his one sentence in regard to the resurrection of the dead. Felix said he would give his decision when Lysias the chief captain came. Meanwhile he ordered Paul kept under guard, but permitted him to see his friends.

Some days later Felix came again to see Paul, this time with his wife Drusilla, and Paul talked to him about righteousness, self-control and the coming judgment. Felix was terrified, and said he would hear him again when convenient. Felix hoped to receive a bribe for his release, and often sent for Paul, but at the end of two years, when he was succeeded by Festus, he left him in prison so as to gain favor with the Jews.

The Jews appealed to Festus as soon as he came to Jerusalem to have Paul brought there for a trial, for they would have him killed on the way, but Festus said he would try him at Cæsarea. The trial took place there, and his accusers could not prove their charges. To please the Jews Festus asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem for a public trial, and Paul then as a Roman citizen appealed to Cæsar. "Unto Cæsar shalt thou go," said Festus.

Some days after King Agrippa and Bernice made a visit to the new Governor, and Festus told them about Paul. Upon the king's expressing a wish to hear him himself, Festus arranged a public interview for the next day. On that occasion Festus declared that he had found no fault in Paul, and had asked King Agrippa to hear him in order to know what to write to Cæsar. Agrippa asked Paul to speak. As before, Paul told of his life as a Pharisee, his persecution of the Christians, and of his wonderful conversion on the way to Damascus, where he had been told that he was to be a light to the Gentiles.

Lesson IV. "To that vision on the way to Damascus I was not disobedient," Paul cried. "First those at Damascus and at Jerusalem and throughout Judea, and then the Gentiles, I exhorted to repent and do works worthy of repentance. This is why the Jews would take my life, but I have received help from God, and thus I stand and bear my testimony, adding nothing to what Moses and the prophets said, that the Christ must suffer and by His resurrection from the dead proclaim light to the Jews and to the Gentiles."

"You are mad, Paul, your great learning has made you mad," Festus interrupted. "I am not mad, most excellent Festus," Paul returned, "but I speak words of truth and soberness, as the King knows." Then turning to Agrippa Paul asked, "Kink Agrippa do you believe the prophets? I know you do." Scornfully Agrippa returned, "With very little persuasion you think to make

me a Christian." "Whether with little or much persuasion," nobly answered Paul, "I would that you and all these here were such as I am, save these chains."

At a consultation among themselves Agrippa declared that Paul had not been guilty of anything deserving death or imprisonment, and had he not appealed to Cæsar he might have been set at liberty.

It was decided to send Paul to Italy, and with other prisoners he was given into the care of a centurion named Julius. They boarded a ship bound for the ports of Asia. The ship stopped at Sidon, and Julius allowed Paul to visit his friends there. Putting to sea again they sailed to Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy and embarked with it. The wind was unfavorable, and after sailing slowly as far as Cnidus they were obliged to change their course. They sailed around Crete and landed at Fair Havens. Sailing was now dangerous, and Paul warned them that a further voyage would imperil life and property. The captain was anxious to go farther along the coast, however, as the harbor was not a good one in which to spend the winter, and it was decided to go on to Phenice.

Lesson V. A favorable wind sprang up from the south and they set sail. Then followed a hurricane that blew across the island from the north, and the ship was driven before it. Under the lee of the small island of Cauda they managed to hoist on board the boat that was floating behind, and to undergird the ship. Fearing they would drift far south on to the Syrtis Sands they lowered sail. The next day they threw part of the cargo overboard, and the day after the ship's tackling. For many days neither sun nor stars shone, and the tempest continued till all hope of being saved was given up. Then Paul came forward and said: "You know that I warned you not to sail from Crete, and now I urge you to be of good cheer, for an angel of God has assured me that I must stand before Cæsar, and has promised me that the lives of all shall be spared, but we shall be cast upon an island."

The fourteenth night after the beginning of the storm they were drifting about in the Adriatic Sea when at midnight the sailors thought land was near. They took soundings twice and found the water was getting shallower, and then anchored for the night lest they be driven upon a rocky coast. Paul discovered that the sailors had lowered the boat and were about to make their escape, and warned the centurion. At his command the soldiers cut away the boat. Then Paul urged them all to eat, and when he offered thanks and began eating himself they took heart and ate also. There were seventy-six in all on board. They then threw the grain overboard, and waited for daylight.

Lesson VI. Morning dawned. What the land before them was they did not know, but they saw a beach and determined to run the ship upon it. In a plac where two seas seemed to meet, the ship ran aground, the bow held fast, and the stern was quickly broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers wished to kill the prisoners lest they should escape, but the centurion would not permit this, and ordered all who could swim to jump overboard, and those who could not to follow on planks and broken pieces of the ship. All safely reached the shore, which proved to be the island of Malta. It was raining and cold, and the people of Malta built a fire. Paul gathered sticks for it, and when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened on his hand, the natives said one to another, "This man must be a murderer, for though he has been saved from the sea, Justice does not allow him to live." Paul shook the creature into the fire, and when they saw that he did not fall down dead and no harm of any sort came to him, the changed their minds and said that he was a god.

Publius, the governor of the island, received and entertained them for three days. It happened that the father of Publius was taken ill, and Paul cured him, and after that all the people of the island who were ill were brought to him and were cured. When the time came to leave the island, the people put on board what was needed for the voyage.

Lesson VII. After three months had been spent on the island, the centurion and his company set sail for Italy in an Alexandrian ship, whose figurehead

was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered there. The ship touched at Syracuse, where three days were spent, and again at Rhegium. When it reached Puteoli they tarried a week and then continued the journey on foot toward Rome. At the Market of Appius and at the Three Taverns Paul was met by brethren who had come from Rome to greet him, and on seeing them he thanked God and took courage. When Rome was reached, Paul was allowed to live by himself under guard of a soldier.

Three days after his arrival, Paul sent for the Jews. He told them that he had done nothing contrary to the customs of their nation, but had been handed over to the Romans as a prisoner, by whom he would have been released had he not been forced to appeal to Cæsar because of the hostility of the Jews, and he further told them that it was because of the hope of Israel that he was bound with a chain. The Jews replied that no word had come to them from Jerusalem, and they would be glad to hear what he had to say about this sect, against which they had heard evil things said.

A day was appointed for the conference. The Jews came in great numbers, and from morning till evening Paul tried to convince them about Jesus from arguments drawn from the law of Moses and the prophets. Some were inclined to believe what he said, and others rejected his teaching. When they disagreed and were about to depart, Paul told them that Isaiah the prophet had spoken truly when he said they would not hear. "Be it known unto you," he then solemnly declared, "that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and they will hear."

For two years Paul lived in his own house and with perfect freedom and boldness taught all who came to him about the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson VIII. To the Corinthians Paul wrote in his second letter an account of his life and work as an apostle. Others had boasted, he told them, of being Hebrews, he was a Hebrew. They claimed to be Israelites, he was an Israelite. They were descendants of Abraham. So was he. Servants of Christ, they claimed to be also. Much more was he, for he had engaged in more labor and suffered more imprisonments. He had been flogged countless times, often had been near to death, five times had been beaten by the Jews and three times by the Romans, and once stoned. Three times he had suffered shipwreck, and on his journeys had often been in peril from swollen streams and from robbers. Dangers, too, he had suffered from his own people, and also from the Gentiles. Hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness he had endured, and with it all there had been for him the daily anxious care for all the churches. Then he referred to his visions. Whether in the body or out of the body at the time, he knew not, but he had been caught up to the third heaven, and there had heard things about which he could not speak. He might well boast of these privileges, but he would refrain lest any one should regard him more highly on that account. To prevent his thinking too highly of himself he had been given a thorn in the flesh to discipline him. He had prayed to be freed from this thorn, but the Lord's reply had been, "My help is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness"; therefore, Paul gloried in his weakness, for, said he, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

Lesson IX. Writing to the Romans, Paul said, "Why should you judge a brother? Or why should you despise a brother? Judgment belongs to God; before His bar each one of us must give an account of himself. Let us, therefore, cease to judge one another, but resolve rather not to put a stumbling block in another's way. As regards your trouble I know that there is nothing in itself defiling, yet if one of you think that meat offered to idols is defiling, then he should not eat it and violate his conscience, and if one of you think such meat is not defiling, he, too, should not eat it if thereby he offend his brother or cause him to stumble. Abstain from meat or wine or anything that is a stumbling block to your brother. The kingdom of God consists not in eating and drinking, but in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

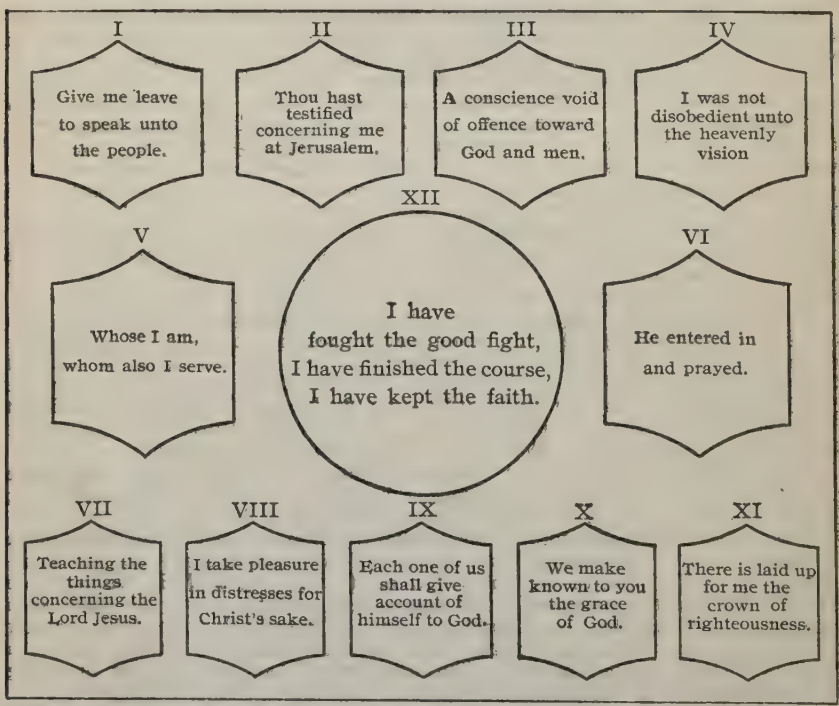
Lesson X. To the Corinthians Paul wrote exhorting them to complete their collection for the poor at Jerusalem. For their emulation he cited the example of the Macedonian Churches, who in their great poverty had yet given most liberally, and, what was best of all, had made the greatest possible gift,

that of themselves, to God. He reminded them, too, of Christ's great sacrifice for them. He had urged Titus to finish the collection begun among them before the Macedonians took hold of the work, and now he urged those who had shown their faith and earnestness and love for him, to prove their love by their gifts. He was not commanding, he was only suggesting to them the right course. Their giving should be in accordance with their means, for it was the willingness, not the amount, of one's gift that made it acceptable to God. His object was not to relieve others by causing them distress, but to have them share their abundance now with others, and the time might come when others would share their abundance with them.

Lesson XI. Paul's last message was written from his cell in Rome to Timothy "his beloved child." He solemnly charged him to proclaim the gospel, to be ready at all times to convince, rebuke, encourage, and instruct with all patience, for a time would come when the people would not listen to sound doctrine, but would turn aside to teachers of fables. Timothy must be sober in all things, must endure hardships, must discharge the duties of his ministry, for he must take his place. He himself was about to be sacrificed for the cause he loved. "I have run life's race, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith," he wrote triumphantly. And then, after warning Timothy against enemies, and pathetically referring to the time when all had forsaken him, he declared, "The Lord will rescue me from all evil, and bring me safely into His kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever! Amen."

A BLACKBOARD REVIEW

(A sentence from each lesson emphasizing the thought of the Golden Text for the Quarter.)


I
Give me leave to speak unto the people.
II
Thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem.
III
A conscience void of offence toward God and men.
IV
I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision
XII
I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.
V
Whose I am, whom also I serve.
VI
He entered in and prayed.
VII
Teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus.
VIII
I take pleasure in distresses for Christ's sake.
IX
Each one of us shall give account of himself to God.
X
We make known to you the grace of God.
XI
There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.

Have this diagram copied on the board before the school session. Call for the Golden Text for the quarter. Then write on the board the numeral I and ask who were the chief persons in the first lesson. Write *Paul and the Mob* after that numeral. Explain that in lesson I we learned of a great injustice. As you

write the words *A great Injustice* in the second column, inquire what was the injustice. Have the sentence in the diagram under the numeral I read, and explain its relation to the Golden Text under numeral XII. Then call for a practical lesson truth from some scholar to whom has been assigned the thought given in the list below. When all the lessons have been reviewed in this way you will have written on the board these columns:

	Chief Persons.	Chief Facts
I.	Paul and the Mob.	A Great Injustice.
II.	Paul and the Jews.	A Great Plot.
III.	Paul and Felix.	A Great Defence.
IV.	Paul and Agrippa.	A Great Avowal
IV.	Paul and the Seventy-five.	A Great Storm
VI.	Paul and the Melitans	A Great Shipwreck
VII.	Paul and the Romans	A Great Preacher
VIII.	Paul and the Corinthians	A Great Life
IX.	Paul and the Romans	A Great Responsibility
X.	Paul and the Corinthians	A Great Collection
XI.	Paul and Timothy	A Great Charge

Practical Lesson Truths

These statements may be assigned in advance to eleven scholars. Or they may be written or reproduced with printed lettes on eleven large sheets of paper, the sheets fastened together and hung where they can be plainly seen. Turn over each sheet after it has been read by the school when called for. By fancy lettering or by drawing pleasing borders the sheets may be made attractive. Instead of these truths a sentence sermon may be given from each lesson.

Lesson I. There are hardships in every one's life, and each one may bear them as heroically as Paul did his.

Lesson II. Earnest effort should accompany trust in God.

Lesson III. We, too, may have a clear conscience both toward God and toward men.

Lesson IV. If we are obedient to God's will we can make Paul's avowal.

Lesson V. Our words and our lives should agree.

Lesson VI. The way we live each day determines the way we shall be ready for an emergency.

Lesson VII. Encouragers are always needed.

Lesson VIII. Be a hero in the strife.

Lesson IX. We are our brother's keeper.

Lesson X. It is still more blessed to give than to receive.

Lesson XI. May it be said of us with truth, "Life's race was well run, life's work well done, life's crown well won."

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

I. What did the Jews accuse Paul of doing at Jerusalem contrary to their laws? Why was he arrested?

II. How was Paul cheered in prison at Jerusalem? Why was he sent to Cæsarea?

III. How long was Paul imprisoned at Cæsarea? About what did he talk to Felix, and what was Felix' answer?

IV. What did Paul answer Agrippa when Agrippa told him he wished to make him a Christian? Why did Paul ask to be sent for trial to Cæsar?

V. At what island did the ship stop on which Paul was being taken to Rome? What happened after they left Fair Havens?

VI. Where did the shipwreck occur? How did all escape? Why did the people of the island first think Paul a murderer? What next did they think him to be?

VII. What encouraged Paul when he was nearing Rome? What did he tell the Jews of Rome?

VIII. What were some of the things that Paul said he had endured when he wrote to the Corinthians the story of his life? How had he endured them?

IX. What reason did Paul give the Romans for denying oneself?
X. What saying of Christ's about giving did Paul repeat to the Corinthians? What did Paul urge the Corinthians to do?
XI. To whom did Paul write his last words? What did he say about his own life?

QUESTIONS FOR A WRITTEN REVIEW FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. What was the motive of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem? 2. What caused his arrest there? 3. What plot was formed against his life and how was it foiled? 4. Who was Felix and how did he regard Paul? 5. Why did he leave him in prison? 6 Who were Festus and Agrippa? 7. What did each of them say to Paul while he was making his defence before them? 8. Why was Paul sent to Rome? 9. Describe the course of Paul on his way to Rome. 10 What happened at Fair Havens, and at Melita? 11. What spirit did Paul show on the way from Jerusalem to Rome? 12. Why was it best for Paul to go to Rome? 13. What letters were written by Paul during the time covered by this quarter's lessons? 14 Which one of the quarter's lessons has been most helpful to you? Why?

ESSAY WORK FOR THE OLDER PUPILS

1. Paul's early life and training for his work.
2. Paul's life as a Pharisee and as a Christian.
3. An account of Paul's arrest, imprisonment, and voyage to Rome
4. What Paul accomplished.
5. An appreciation of Paul.
6. Felix, Festus, and Agrippa before Paul.
7. The friends of Paul.
8. The enemies of Paul.
9. Twelve prominent workers in the Acts.
10. The cities of the Acts.
11. The persecution under Nero.
12. Rome in Paul's time.
13. For each lesson of the quarter write a truth learned, and a sentence sermon and a thought of your own in regard to that truth.

A REVIEW OF THE ACTS

1. How many chapters has the book of Acts? 2. With what event does it begin? 3. With what does it close? 4. About how many years does its history cover?

5. What city was the scene of the first seven chapters? 6. What may this period be called? 7. About how many years does it cover? 8. Who is the leader? 9. To what nation is Christianity limited?

10. Where is the scene of chapters 8-12? 11. What may this period be called? 12. How many years does it cover? 13. Who are the leaders? 14. To what Gentiles is the Gospel preached?

15. In what countries do the events of the last sixteen chapters occur? 16. What may this period be called? 17. How many years does it cover? 18. Who is the leader? 19. To whom is the gospel preached?

A BOOK REVIEW

1. How many books are there in the New Testament? 2. Name them. 3. By how many authors were they written? 4. Which author was a Gentile? 5. Which authors were among the twelve apostles? 6. Who were probably brothers of Jesus?

7. Who were the Evangelists, and why were they so called? 8. What is the theme of the Gospels?

9. What is the historical book called? 10. Who wrote it? 11. What other New Testament books did the author of the Acts write? 12. What is the purpose of the Acts? 13. When was it probably written?

14. How many Epistles are there in the New Testament? 15. Name them in

the order in which they are printed. 16 Which is the longest one? 17. Which is the shortest? 18. Which has only one chapter? 19. Which are addressed to churches? 20. Which to individuals?

21. How many letters were probably written by Paul? 22. Name them in the order printed. 23. Name them in the probable order in which they were written. 24. What is the relation of the Pauline Epistles to the Acts? 25. Which were written during Paul's second missionary journey? 26. Which during his third missionary journey? 27. Which during his imprisonment at Rome? 28. Which probably between his first and second imprisonment at Rome? 29 What led Paul to write his two letters to the Thessalonians? 30. His two letters to the Corinthians? 31. His letter to the Romans? 32. His letter to Timothy? 33. What were the probable date and place of writing of each of the epistles from which we have had lessons? 34. What were the purpose and character of each?

35. Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews? 36. What is its purpose? 37. Name the General Epistles. 38. What is the character of the Epistle of James?

A REVIEW OF PAUL'S TEACHINGS

In what lesson and what did Paul teach in regard to:—

1. The nearness of God? 2. The worship of God? 3. Obedience to God? 4. Trusting God? 5. God's witness of Himself to the heathen nations? 6. The Kingdom of God? 7. The purpose of life? 8. The relation of Christianity to Judaism? 9. Repentance? 10. Salvation? 11. The resurrection? 12. The reward of righteousness? 13. The Judgment? 14. Steadfastness of faith? 15. Conscience? 16. Respect for rulers? 17. Debts? 18. Temperance? 19. Self-sacrifice? 20. Service? 21. Rejoicing? 22. Rights? 23. Work? 24. Love? 25. Giving? 26 Charity without love? 27. Judging others? 28. Boasting? 29. Responsibility for others? 30. Use of trouble?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. Tell the story of the announcement to the Shepherds of the Saviour's birth. 2. Who were the Magi or Wise-men? 3. How could the Wise-men have heard about the expected King of the Jews? 4. Why did they come to Jerusalem? 5. Why was Herod troubled? 6. Why were the people troubled? 7. What is the meaning of Herod's question in verse 4? 8. Why did he ask what time the star had appeared? (Verse 16.) 9. What did Herod do when the Wise-men failed to return? (Matt. 2.13-23.) 10. What prophet is referred to in verse 5? (See the marginal notes of your Bible.) 11. What purpose did the visit of the Wise-men serve? 12. What gifts did the Queen of Sheba bring King Solomon? (1 Kings 10.2.) 13. Why do we celebrate Christmas by giving gifts? 14. What should be the Christmas spirit? 15 Is it, and should it be, confined to the Christmas season?

LESSON XIII—DECEMBER 26

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Read Matthew 2.1-12. Commit verses 11, 12.

Golden Text

And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Matt. 1.21.

LESSON TEXT Matt. 2.1-12

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3 And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written through the prophet.

6 And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

7 Then Herod privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him. 9 And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 10 And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned *of God* in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

WORDS AND PHRASES EXPLAINED

1. *Herod the King.* Called Herod the Great, the founder of the Herodian family, whose descendants appear throughout the New Testament history. His own reign lasted thirty-seven years.—*Wise-men from the east.* The tradition that there were three Wise-men, Casper, Melchior, and Balthazar, may have originated from the fact that their gifts were of three kinds, verse 11.

2. *King of the Jews.* See Jer. 23.5; Zech. 9.9; Matt. 27.11.—*We saw his star in the east.* According to Kepler's theory and calculations the star was a conjunction of planets that shone like one star; the Gospel narrative implies a supernatural phenomenon.—*To worship him.* R. V. M., the Greek word denotes an act of reverence whether paid to a creature (4.9) or to the Creator (4.10).

3. *He was troubled.* He feared a pretender to his throne.—*All Jerusalem with him.* Probably because they feared Herod, who was cruel and unscrupulous.

4. *The chief priests and scribes of the people.* Members of the Sanhedrin, who, as Herod knew, would be familiar with the prophecies.—*The Christ.* ὁ χριστός, the Christ, the Anointed, the Messiah.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST—THE MAGI GUIDED BY THE STAR

5. *In Bethlehem of Judea.* See John 7.42.—*It is written through the prophet.* Micah 5.2.

6. *Shepherd.* See John 21.16. "It is here quoted with some change of phraseology which may be readily explained. Micah used an antique name—Bethlehem Ephratah. Matthew takes the common New Testament form, Bethlehem Judah, not the purely Greek form Judea, and prefixes *land,* as when we say 'Richmond, State of Virginia.' Micah says, *Thou art litle to be among the thousands of Judah* (yet) *out of thee;* meaning that it is a small and insignificant place, scarcely worthy to be marked among the towns of Judah—yet out of it would come, etc.; while Matthew turns toward the moral importance of Bethlehem, as derived from this very fact, and so he puts it, *art in no wise the least among the provinces of Judah, for out of thee. Thousands* was an antique designation of the great families into which the tribes were subdivided, and was applied by Micah to a town as a residence of such a family; while Matthew uses the more familiar term, *princes,* meaning those who by birth stand at the head of the great families, and might therefore represent them or their abode" (*Broadus*).

7. *Learned of them exactly what time the star appeared.* See verse 16.

10. *They rejoiced.* This, and the expression in verse 9, *lo, the star,* imply that the star had not been visible all the time, and its reappearance was unexpected to them.

11. *The house.* See the Geographical Background.

12. *Another way.* Without going through Jerusalem, they could have gone south through Hebron into Idumea, or northeastward to Jericho and the Jordan, and then eastward.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS FROM HELPFUL WRITERS

2. *We saw his star.* A far better star actually shines for us than shone for these Magi. It is the star of the Christ himself. His star shines for us in His sinlessness—a perfect standard of perfect living. It shines in His forgiveness—His finished atonement. It shines in His resurrection—His mastery of death and disclosure of the certainty of the other life. *Wayland Hoyt.*

All round about our feet shall shine
A light like that the wise men saw,
If we our loving wills incline
To that sweet Life which is the law.
James Russell Lowell.

4. *Where the Christ should be born.* Let us super-impose Christ's will and mind over ours, desire to serve and please Him and not ourselves, make Him in all things our conscience, and bring everything to the test of that conscience. Is there any ideal in life which for grandeur can be compared to this, that we should—in love, in desire, by patience, by hope, by prayer—so submit our very life to Christ, until we have taken the form of Christ, and He be formed in us? This is the Christ-birth of which the birth in Bethlehem was a shadow and prophecy. *Hugh Black,* in *Listening to God.*

5. *In Bethlehem of Judea.*

Dear Bethlehem, the proud repose
Of conscious worthiness is thine.
Rest on! The Arab comes and goes,
But farthest Saxon holds thy shrine
More sacred in his stouter Christian hold
Than England's heaped-up iron house of gold.
Joaquin Miller.

8. *Bring we word that I also may come and worship him.*

Hateful to me as are the gates of hell,
Is he who, hiding one thing in his heart,
Utters another. *Homer.*

11. *They fell down and worshipped him.* Is your star leading you to Bethlehem? The question has peculiar significance addressed to the modern rep-

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resentatives of the Magi, the educated classes of the Occident. It is in cultured circles that one often finds the greatest indifference to Jesus and the densest ignorance of His person and work. University graduates hold aloof from the Son of God in such large numbers that the question is mooted from time to time just what the tendency of the educational world really is. Is present-day science hostile to Jesus? Does the philosophy of the modern schools extinguish the light of the star of Bethlehem? Does the observation of phenomena dim the eyes and chill the heart? Does a passion for investigation and the love of research unfit one to kneel at the feet of the King? These are questions to ponder over at Christmas time. We know that certain scholars of the East, by studying the phenomena of nature, were led by their study to the Christ in Bethlehem. Why should not study always, if conducted in the right spirit, lead the soul to Him in whom all things consist? If the characteristic feature of the modern scientific spirit is docility, a willingness to study the facts and follow where they lead, may we not confidently expect that the world of scientific culture will sooner or later find itself casting its gold and frankincense and myrrh at the feet of the King? The passion for knowledge, which is the peculiar glory of our age, must lead men at last to the feet of the Teacher who calmly declares, "I am the truth." *Charles E. Jefferson,* in *The World's Christmas Tree.*

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Wise-men from the East.* In Acts 13.6 the same Greek noun (Μάγοι, Latin *Magi,* in the singular is translated *sorcerer* as applied to Elymas, and in Acts 8.9 the Greek verb translated *used sorcery,* referring to Simon, is derived from this noun. From this Greek word comes our word *magician.* Elymas and Simon were impostors, but the Wise-men of Matthew belonged to the earlier priestly or learned class famous among the Medes, Persians and Babylonians as astronomers, astrologers, physicians, soothsayers and interpreters of dreams. They were nature worshippers, who reverenced the elements, fire, air, earth, water.

2. *We saw his star in the east.* It was quite in keeping with Jewish belief to find indications of great events in the appearances of the heavens, for their ancient Scriptures (Num. 24.17) spoke of a star that should come out of Jacob, and they had long referred the prophecy to their expected Messiah. It was, indeed, universally believed that extraordinary events, especially the birth and death of great men, were heralded by appearances of stars, and still more of comets, or by the conjunction of the heavenly bodies. Belief in the influence of the stars over life and death, and in special portents at the birth of great men, survived to recent times. Shakespeare tells us—

> "When beggars die there are no comets seen;
> The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

Cunningham Geikie, in *The Life of Christ.*

2. *We are come to worship him.* To pay homage to him according to the eastern custom of prostrating themselves before him.

4. *And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born.* The prevailing idea of the rabbis and the people alike was that the Messiah would be simply a great prince, who should found a kingdom of matchless splendor. Almost all fancied that He would be only a human hero, who would lead them to victory. It was agreed among the rabbis that His birthplace must be Bethlehem, and that He must rise from the tribe of Judah. It was believed that he would not know that he was the Messiah till Elias came, accompanied by the prophets, and anointed Him. Till then He would be hidden from the people, living unknown among them. The better rabbis taught that the sins of the nation had kept Him from appearing, and that "if the Jews repented for one day, He would come." *Cunningham Geikie,* in *The Life and Words of Christ.*

11. *They offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.* It was customary in the East to approach kings and princes with a gift in the hand. Even formal visits among friends are preceded by the presentation of gifts; the refusal to accept them is received as a mark of enmity. When Jacob re-

turned from Paddan-Aram and sent his presents to Esau, who had come to meet him, he was anxious about their acceptance. The Queen of Sheba brought Solomon spices, gold and precious stones. The Wise-men brought the gifts most highly valued in their land. The frankincense and myrrh were costly gums obtained from trees; they were used for medicinal purposes and for embalming.

Adoration of the Magi
From a Painting by Hoffman

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The expectation based on the predictions of their prophets, of the advent of a great king who should be their national Deliverer, had for centuries filled the minds and hearts of the Jews. In the days of Herod, "many were persuaded that it was contained in the ancient books of their priests," according to Tacitus, "that at that very time the east should prevail, and that some should proceed from Judea and possess the dominion." Jews of the Dispersion made known this expectation wherever they met, and it may have been from them that it reached the Wise-men. And it may have been that the predictions ascribed to their own prophet Zoroaster which pointed to three deliveries, led these Wise-men to see the greatest of the three in the King of the Jews.

Whatever prophecy made them expect a great king, however mistaken their idea of His kingship, and however false may have been their astrological notions which led them to watch the stars for one that announced His birth, these all aroused the Wise-men to make their long pilgrimage to Bethlehem and lay their tributes at the feet of the Infant Jesus, the spiritual King of the world. God used their imperfect knowledge to make known the perfect truth.

The exact date of Christ's birth is not known. In the days of Herod the King, Matthew says, and though Herod reigned thirty-seven years this was definite enough for him, for Orientals think of time by periods, not by exact number of days as we do. In those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled; this was the first enrollment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria, says Luke. There was a system of periodic enrollment in the province of Syria according to a fourteen year's cycle, and the first enrollment was made in the year 8-7 B. C., but it was sometimes delayed, we are told.

Our present system of chronology, by which we reckon the years before or after the birth of Christ (B. C., before Christ; A. D., Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord) was established in the sixth century A. D. Before that, time was reckoned in the year of the world (A. M., Anno Mundi) or from the founding of Rome (U. C., Urbe Condita). The task of computing the birth of Christ so as to make a new reckoning was given in the sixth century to a learned monk named Dionysius Exiguus. He made an error in his computation and placed the date several years too late. Herod died in April 750 (B. C. 4). Some months must have intervened between the birth of Jesus and the slaughter of the babes at Bethlehem by Herod and the latter's death, Joseph having meanwhile taken Mary and the young child into Egypt (Matt. 2.16, 19). The date usually accepted for His birth is B. C. 5, four years and one week (if we accept Dec. 25th as the day) before the year which is called A. D. 1. In Jan. A. D. 2, Jesus was five years old; in Jan. A. D. 3, Jesus was six years old: thus we must always add three years to the date of any event to determine His age at that time.

Christmas was not observed even according to tradition until the second century after Christ, and it was celebrated in different parts of Europe and Asia

in various months, until in the fourth century both the Eastern and Western churches agreed upon December 25th as the right day.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The interview of Herod and the Wise-men took place in Jerusalem. Bethlehem, where the Wise-men found the Infant "King of the Jews" is six miles southwest of Jerusalem on the road to Hebron. The Hebrew name, Beth Lehem, means the "House of Bread," and referred doubtless to the fertility of the surrounding region.

In a natural cave beneath the Church of the Nativity (the oldest part of which may have been erected by Constantine in the fourth century A. D.) there is a so-called Chapel of the Manger, where, it is claimed, the Infant Jesus was laid. The "house" visited by the Wise-men was not the place of the manger, as so often erroneously stated, but the temporary abiding place of the family, for their visit was made some little time after Jesus' birth.

THE APPROACH TO THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Did Santa Claus remember you well yesterday? We have our name Santa Claus from the people of Holland, for it is the Dutch name of St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas is called "the patron saint of boys," but he seems to look out just as well for the girls. Did you ever hear of Kriss Kringle? That is the German name for the one who is supposed to bring the Christmas gifts. It comes from the two German words *Christ-Kindlein*, and therefore it means the Little Christ Child.

The Dutch people who in the early days of our country settled in New York and Pennsylvania, the English who settled in Virginia, and the French and Spanish people still farther south, kept Christmas, but the Pilgrims in New England did not. Fifty years ago, even, Christmas was not generally kept in New England. It is now a legal holiday in all our states and territories, but it was not when Webster's dictionary was written, and in that book we read that "Christmas is an annual festival and in some states a legal holiday, in memory of the birth of Christ."

Yesterday we celebrated Christmas and had a happy, joyous time giving gifts to one another, and to-day we are to talk about that first Christmas day and about the first gifts that were brought to the Little Christ Child.

For Older Pupils. The earthly life and teachings of the Christ whom Paul preached is to be the theme of our lessons for the coming year, and to-day we take up His birth and the visit of the Wise-men. See the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Christmas Spirit

It is the Spirit of Love. Three Sundays ago we had for our Golden Text Paul's counsel to the Ephesian elders, Remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. At Christmas time we always realize this truth, learning not only that there is blessedness in giving but that blessedness lies in the possession of the spirit that prompts the giving. No matter how busy or troubled or poor we may be, we forget ourselves at this time and think what we can do for others. In seeking to give others pleasure we find happiness for ourselves.

We are happier at the Christmas season than at other times because we are filled with the "Christmas spirit," the spirit which is ours here and to-day because seven thousand miles from here and more than nineteen hundred years ago a Babe was born. The Christmas spirit is the spirit of love. Giving is the sign of love, and love was taught by Him who was born on Christmas day, and He himself was God's gift of love to us, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, and God Himself is love. Jesus taught us to love God and to love one another. And when He was asked, How shall we love God? He replied, "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And the disciple whom Jesus

loved repeats for us the message, "This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God loveth his brother also." The way to love God is to love others. And the way to love others is to forget ourselves and think about them, to see what we can do to make them happy, to have the Christmas spirit.

Why should this Christmas spirit of love be ours only for a day or a brief season? Why should it not be ours all the days of the year?

"For somehow, not only at Christmas, but all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others, is the joy that comes back to you."

One who had not gained the Christmas Spirit. A rich Russian noble bought the masterpiece of a noted French artist and paid him a large sum, in addition to his price, for his agreement not to make a copy or retain a photograph or even a study of it. It hangs in a room in his palace, and he has the satisfaction of knowing that no one can enjoy that picture but himself and those whom he invites to see it. And the subject of that picture is the Madonna and Child! Certainly he must have coveted that picture as a work of art, and not because he reverenced the Christ Child, or had opened his heart to His influence.

How the Christmas Spirit may be shown.

But welcome, be it new or old,
The gift which makes the day more bright,
And paints upon the ground of cold
And darkness, warmth and light.

This is Whittier's reminder to us that our Christmas spirit must reach out to the poor and lonely and sick as well as to our friends whom we already love. It was a beautiful custom in Holland years ago for the young men to carry through the streets a bright silver star on a standard just before Christmas time, and collect money for the old and helpless.

You remember in Dicken's "Christmas Carol" how the Christmas spirit took possession of the miserly heart of Scrooge and he surprised his ill-paid clerk Bob Cratchit with the gift of a great turkey and an increased salary, after he had resolved that he would "honor Christmas in his heart and try to keep it all the year."

A Vision and an Exhortation. It was the evening before the 25th of December, and I was in the spirit, the spirit of Christmas. In a vision I saw the whole Christian world making ready for the great festival. In imagination I roamed over my own country, and in my vision I visited all the continents and I know not how many islands of the sea, and in every home to which the name of Jesus had been carried I found everybody planning and getting ready for Christmas.

But before I was half way round the world a fear sprang up in my heart which was increased by everything I saw. It dawned upon me that on the night before Christmas it is possible to forget the Person after whom Christmas Day is named. Even into this garden of Eden at whose center there stands the Christmas tree the serpent of selfishness had crawled, and I began to meditate on the spirit in which Christmas gifts are often given.

In short, the human race had crystalized into a countless number of little circles, and from hand to hand around each circle the presents passed, few circles having their center Christ. "I shall give something to you and I wonder what I shall get from you." This was the unspoken thought in every country through which I passed.

And while I pondered I saw in my vision the human race rise up before me, the great, fallen, needy race of men. Shocked by the spectacle, I turned hurriedly around, and there full before me rose a Christmas tree. And while I was musing a voice from above said to me:

"This is the World's Christmas Tree! What will you put on the tree for humanity? What gift will you give to humankind? What benefaction will you present to society? How will you celebrate the birthday of Jesus?"

And when I reflected that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that the world through Him might be saved, I began to wonder

if our Christmas celebrations are, after all, genuinely Christian, and whether the ordinary family Christmas tree really strengthens in the world the spirit of Him who says: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

No matter how poor a man is in the goods of this world he can put on the World's Christmas Tree gifts which will cause rejoicings forever. What does the world need? What will make the world most happy? What will banish its darkness and augment its joy? What the world needs is faith and hope and love, justice and sympathy and temperance, conscience and truth and courage, patience and fidelity and kindness.

What will you give? It is for you to decide. You can give anything that you will. Christmas Eve is a good time in which to reach a decision. The evening is lost unless in it the question is decided. Would it not be well to give something you have never given hitherto?

Why not make a gift of your will? On whose side have you cast your life during the past year? Have you been drifting with the current? Have you been the sport of circumstances? Have you been the slave of your environment? Have you been carried hither and thither by every wind that blows? Have you fallen into the prevailing customs and practices of the day, saying with a laugh that when one is in Rome he must do as the Romans do? Life all around you has been narrow and barren and sordid, ideals have been low and ambitions have been petty—why not throw yourself on the other side and labor to make life noble and rich and fruitful and sweet? Why not fight a good fight? Why not finish the course? Why not keep the faith? Why not start to-night to win a crown? Condensed from *The World's Christmas Tree,* by *Dr. Charles E. Jefferson.*

II There is Born to You this Day a Saviour

How the Good News was received. When the advent of the Christ Child was announced, Herod was troubled, so troubled that he craftily asked the Wise-men where the star that announced His birth, as he probably himself believed, had appeared. He bade them return and tell him where they had found the Child, but he feared they would not obey, so he took the precaution to learn how old the Babe might be. And when they did not return, he sent his men to Bethlehem with orders to slay all the boys two years old and under, not only in Bethlehem, but "in all the borders thereof," for his heart was only full of murderous hatred for this Babe that was born King of the Jews.

The announcement of the birth of Jesus was received with silent indifference by the high priests and scribes. They were so familiar with the prophecies, but so indifferent to the fact! They told Herod where He was to be born, but they carried no gold and frankincense and myrrh to Bethlehem, there to pay their own homage to the Christ.

The Wise-men and the humble shepherds alone obeyed the vision and sought and found the Child, and then went their way rejoicing.

Types these all are, Herod and the scribes and the Wise-men, of men in every age since; some there always are who reject Christ, some there are who are indifferent to Him, some there are who receive Him with joy.

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, for to you is born this day a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. A rich man once sent his servant to Melancthon to inquire why in the German Christmas song he heard the children sing, "A little Child so winsome is born to you *to-day.*" "Ask your master," returned Melancthon, "whether he has not need *to-day* of a Saviour."

Are we Better than the Chief Priests and Scribes?

How do we keep His birthday now?
We ring the bells, and we raise the strain,
We hang up garlands everywhere,
And bid the tapers twinkle fair,
And feast and frolic, and then we go
Back to the same old lives again.

Are we so much better, then, than they
Who failed the newborn Christ to see?

To them a helpless babe; to us
He shines a Saviour glorious,
Our Lord, our Friend, our All—yet we
Are half asleep this Christmas day. *Susan Coolidge.*

Why did Jesus Christ come into the World? When Jesus Christ came into the world it was full of religion. There were temples and altars everywhere. The Pantheon at Rome housed as many as thirty thousand gods, and all objects and phenomena of nature symbolized divinity.

Nor was there any want of moral precepts. The literature of the day is full of them. The brotherhood of man had its high place in lofty sentiment. Theatres rang with plaudits when it was mentioned. And the fatherhood of God was a fundamental conception of the religion of the pagan as well as of the prophet.

To say, therefore, that Jesus Christ came to be a religious Teacher or Guide or Example or to represent divinity, does not differentiate His religion from the vast stock with which the world was already supplied, or distinguish His mission on earth. He was not simply a greater Teacher or better Guide or more perfect Example than others. He was something more. What?

Turning to the record we find it said in the announcement of His coming: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." That which names Him is His mission as a Saviour. It separates Him from all sages, philosophers, teachers, prophets, and priests. "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." His name is alone. There is no other name that parallels or approaches it. Jesus is the Saviour and the only Saviour.

Again, it is clear that the salvation which Jesus Christ came to bring was not directed first toward the state or society. It was the fatal mistake of His people that they persisted in expecting Him to save the state, but He refused, just as He declined to take up the abuses of society. What Jesus came to save was sinners.

But mark, it is personal salvation. Jesus Christ is a personal Saviour and the sinner is personally saved. To tell men and women of selfish disposition about moral duty wearies and repels them. To tell them of a Saviour who changes that disposition and turns duty into privilege and service into joy, attracts them. It makes the gospel good news. Condensed from an Editorial in *The Advance.*

III Missionary Topic. Guided to the Christ

Led by a Dream. In our study this year of the Apostolic Church we have seen the gospel first brought to the Gentiles, but in these Wise-men the Church has from very early times recognized the first Gentile worshippers of Christ. That God awakens in human souls a longing for their Saviour, even as He led the Wise-men to seek and find Jesus, is the lesson of their coming to Bethlehem. They were guided by the star, others are guided by dreams, by the sacred Scriptures, by the words of men filled with the Spirit.

A Norwegian missionary went in 1879 to the island of Tongoa, one of the New Hebrides group, whose natives were cannibals. Twice a year, at the time of sowing and again at the time of harvest, they called upon God, but at other times worshipped many gods. Soon after his arrival he was taken ill with fever, and while still unable to sit up he received a visit from the chief named Matabuti. The chief greeted him with these words: "I am heartily glad that you have come to this island. A long time ago I had a wonderful dream, I saw a ladder that reached from earth to heaven where God was sitting. As soon as you came, I knew that you are the man belonging to the ladder. Come to my village and tell us what you know about that ladder." In twenty years through the efforts of this one missionary all the natives of the island had become Christians. Without Matabuti's help the change could not have been wrought so quickly. Was not Matabuti led by God through his dream, even as the Wise-men by the vision of the star, to seek and find the King? "Each ear may hear the angels sing, each eye may see the shining star."

In Need of the Star. A teacher in the Philippines one morning after Christmas heard a little brown boy exclaim, "I kissed God last night," and when she questioned him to know what he meant, she learned that in the services at the Catholic church a beautifully dressed doll, which was called the "Baby Jesus," had been shown and reverently kissed by all the people. "How far those little ones are from knowing the real Christ!" she thought.

Over in China there is a city where still less of Christ is known. "Think of living in a land where, instead of the bright, happy Christmastide, there is kept up a devil's birthday!" writes one who has been there. "The greatest cathedral in China is dedicated to the devil. The great temple to 'the God of the Eastern Hell' is the great shrine to which rich and poor, officials and students, mothers and children, feel irresistibly drawn. Instead of a Christmastide, they celebrate a Devil-mas-tide. In place of the thought of a gift of divine love, their thoughts turn to the doings of the evil demon."

"If we are glad that the King was born,
Born in Bethlehem, on that Christmas morn,
Then we'll tell the news, tell it near and far,
Till the whole wide world knows about the star."

A Prayer.

Yet doth the Star of Bethlehem shed
A lustre pure and sweet;
And still it leads as once it led,
To the Messiah's feet.

O Father, may that holy Star
Grow every year more bright,
And send its glorious beams afar
To fill the world with light. *William Cullen Bryant.*

SENTENCE SERMONS

Whatsoever sort of Wise-men they were before, now they begin to be wise men indeed when they set themselves to inquire after Christ. *Matthew Henry.*

Every day should be the birthday of the Saviour to a renewed soul. *C. H. Spurgeon.*

O holy Child of Bethlehem!
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us to-day. *Phillips Brooks.*

The only real blind person at Christmas time is he who has not Christmas in his heart. *Hellen Keller.*

Christmas is a star which shines to lead men to Jesus. *Charles E. Jefferson.*

In spite of the stare of the wise and the world's derision,
Dare travel the star-blazed road, dare follow the vision.
Edwin Markham.

I will honor Christmas in my heart. *Dickens.*

The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. John 1.14.

Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. 1 John 4.9.

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. 2 Cor. 9.15.

O star which led to Him whose love
Brought hope and mercy free!
Where art thou?—'mid the host above
May we still gaze on thee?
In heaven thou art not set,
Thy rays earth might not dim;
Send them to guide us yet,
O star which led to Him! *Felicia Hemans.*

Presented by

THE LESSON'S MEANINGS FOR US

The Wise-men gave both their gifts and also their homage to the Christ; are we Wise-men?

Washington Irving has called Christmas the season of regenerated feeling—the season for kindling not merely the fire of hospitality in the hall, but the genial flame of charity in the heart. Let us keep this Christmas flame alive throughout the year.

The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. What shall we render unto God for this unspeakable gift? The Macedonians first gave their own selves to the Lord, said Paul.

> Another year is dawning! dear Master let it be
> In working or in waiting, another year with Thee.
>
> *Frances Ridley Havergal.*

THE LESSON BRIEFLY TOLD

King Herod is greatly troubled. Wise-men from the East have come to him inquiring, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the East and are come to worship him." Is his rule endangered by the birth of a claimant to the royal house of David, one who will have the allegiance of the turbulent people of Israel? Herod is crafty as well as suspicious. He will learn from the chief priests and scribes "where the Christ should be born," he will inform the Wise-men and order them to return after they have found the child, claiming that he would go and worship Him, too, he will learn from them when the star appeared, that he may know the age of the young claimant to his throne. Surely that Babe shall not escape his vigilant search, even though the Wise-men fail him!

The priests and scribes know the prophecy and the birthplace of the Christ, and the star guides the Wise-men to it. They find the young Child with Mary His mother, and fall down and worship Him. They leave their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, and, warned by God in a dream, they do not return to Herod, but depart unto their own country another way.

Herod is very angry, and sends and slays all the children in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under. But the young Child and His mother have already been taken to Egypt by Joseph, for God had warned him.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The pathos of the search for God by those who believe the Eastern religions.

2. What Christmas means to the world. See symposium by Edwin Markham, Madame Schumann-Heink, Eva Booth, and Rev. Charles F. Aked in *Delineator,* of December, 1907. See "An Advent Thought" in *The Outlook* for December 7th and 14th, and "A Christmas Thought," December 21st, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

1. How old was Jesus when he began His public ministry? (Luke 3.23.) 2. What city had been his home? 3. What one incident of His youth is recorded in Luke? (Luke 2.42.) 4. Learn all you can about John the Baptist. 5. What does Mark call him in Mark 6.14, 24? 6. Was John the Baptist John the Evangelist? 7. Read Mark 1.1-11; Luke 3.1-17, and John 1.6-8, 19-28.

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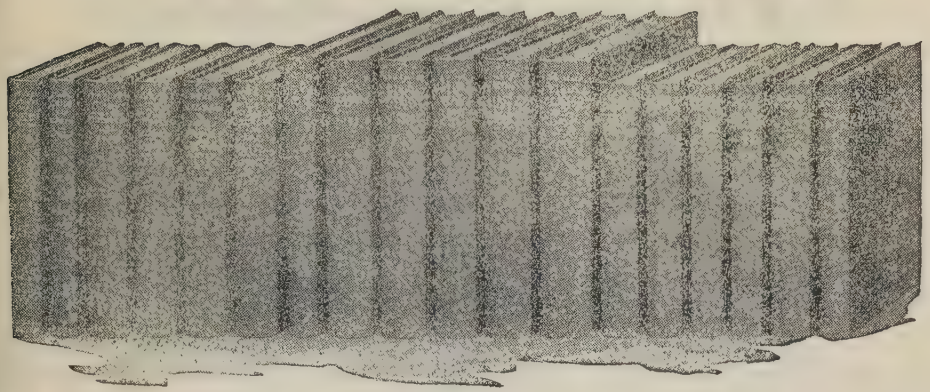

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